In TFH we use muscle tests to get a sense of the energy flow in the meridians. We develop goals, assess the flow of energy, use various reflexes to balance energy and then reassess how we feel. Our purpose is to increase awareness of all of the aspects of our whole Soul and to facilitate the flow of energy and communication between all of the cells, organs and organ systems, between the conscious mind, the unconscious, our intuition, and our connection to Chi, life energy, or God.

Our premise is that a sufficient flow of information/energy will result in an emotional, physical, mental and spiritual equilibrium that will allow us to feel whole, to do the things that are most important to us, and to find meaning in life. Creative use of metaphors can enhance our assessment of our own wellness in the context of our life, help balance our energies towards our goals and help us discover new passions and purposes that are right for us. Awareness is the key aspect of the process. We may feel a lot better physically, mentally and emotionally after a balancing, but the true power of TFH is in developing our awareness of the things that we really want from life and the things that block our energy to accomplish our goals.

The Five Element Metaphors, the Organ Function metaphors and metaphors derived from the test motions/muscle functions offer a rich resource for exploring the meanings of our experiences, our feelings, our imbalances and our goals. Using the metaphors helps us to verbalize or at least think about the many possible aspects of our goals and the related imbalances. When we think about a metaphor related to an imbalance indicated by a muscle test, we often have that "Aha!" moment of insight. This may be a highly transcendent, sudden, miraculous moment of enlightenment, like those attained in prayer or meditation, or it may also be a step-by-step process of development through small, everyday insights as we deal with our problems, our life's work, and seek our Telos, the purpose in life we were born to fulfill.

The mental exercise of contemplating the metaphor increases parallel processing in diverse areas of the brain and the whole Soul, bringing more of our innate resources to bear in balancing our energies for our unique purposes. Just thinking or talking about the metaphor often balances the energy in all of the meridians as indicated by muscle testing. But thinking about the metaphors also provides all kinds of insights and new perspectives for our life experience.

When we use the word "metaphor", we use it in its broadest sense. We suggest symbolic pictures or actions, figurative or literal similarities, parallels, Corollaries etc. We are looking for any imagery that vividly illustrates or represents some significant aspect of your life. This is largely a creative/associative activity. It may help give you specific conscious insight into your personal life issues, or it may simply help to "get the juices flowing".

The metaphors that correspond to the meridian or muscle imbalance may not apply for your particular goal. They are presented as possibly meaningful, but are not necessarily applicable at a particular moment for a particular person. It is for the person seeking help to decide if the metaphors make sense to them, or helps them have meaning in their lives.

See if any of the metaphors fit your life now, or might relate to some event in the past, or are symbolic of your direction for the future. Start with the basic metaphor and ".  If the suggested metaphor fits, great. If another idea jumps to mind, consider that to be more significant. If the metaphor doesn't fit, and nothing comes to mind, then you might just move on. Or perhaps there is a particular emotion you are feeling when you think of the metaphor. Try to verbalize it, to express it, or simply to be aware of that.

When we leave ourselves open to imagination, free association and non-sequitur responses to the metaphors, we often find strong emotions bubbling up. These may be emotions that have been dismissed or diverted during the day, or repressed over long periods of time. Emotions have a major physical component, and if we can find a safe space to express our emotions, we often find it a great physical relief.

We need to remember that people have hard wired into their Souls the imperatives for survival: hunger, sexual desire, fear, and avoidance of pain etc. The emotions, anger, joy, sympathy, grief, fear, etc. are there to mobilize our Soul, our body-mind-spirit to deal with our survival needs. Denying our emotions and feelings may be literally necessary for survival or to deal with a difficult situation. But habitual or permanent suppression of our emotions can block the flow of energy in the Soul, the whole person, and keep us from utilizing our talents to the fullest, and discovering our unique mission in life. Consider that you may want to allow yourself to experience the emotions that come out when you are balancing your energy and thinking of the metaphors. Be sure that the authority remains with the person being balanced so that if emotions become overwhelming, they can choose to stop and "think of fresh bread" or some other neutral, calming image.

The Five Element Metaphors
In TFH we assume that the 5000-year-old Chinese Five Element metaphors are pictorial or symbolic and thus can have many interpretations. The eleven aspects of each of the elements will be best understood if the words are thought of as pictures that are brought to mind when the words are spoken. We store nearly all of our knowledge and memory in sensory images, which relate to our five senses, our emotions, intuition, and our sense of importance or meaning. The Five Element metaphors are used to elicit associations with images, ideas, sensations and feelings that are meaningful in the context of your life and your current goals.

The Chinese word-picture symbol for "element" might more accurately be translated as "phase". The original pictograph for "xing" means to walk, to move. It suggests action, process and change. Thus, the Five Elements represent the simultaneous processes that are always occurring and counter-balancing each other. These five processes also intertwine as phases within a
variety of cycles. The phases can be related to long cycles such as the seasons of the year or the phases of a human life cycle, or to shorter cycles such as the 24 hour cycle of the day and night or the life cycles of individual cells.

In the Chinese energetic system, there is an emphasis on context and pattern rather than one to one causation. In the West, we tend to seek to dissect a problem, to reduce it to the one cause and the one cure. The Traditional healer in China gathers signs and symptoms until a whole picture of the person emerges with many layers of interrelated meanings. The Eastern approach is person centered. Humans are seen as body-mind-spirit entities with aspects which manifest as more physical, mental or spiritual, but are never only one, taking into account an individual's context and purposes, at a particular moment in time. The West tends to reduce the issue to a single meaning, a named disease that can be killed, or managed.

In TFH, when we are assessing energy, we CAN be analytical, find a dominant imbalance and pinpoint the one most logical place to start balancing, often using only one correction and finding all of the muscles subsequently facilitated. We might be able to prioritize a single key metaphor and balance the energy with that one idea. Certainly there will be times when this kind of efficiency is precisely what we want, but in general our approach is to be aware of as many factors as possible. At any time we may have more than one dominant imbalance. For each different issue or goal we usually see a different pattern of imbalances. Layering of information gives us a whole picture of a person assembled within the context of a whole life.

These explanations and questions are my own creative interpretation of the Five Element metaphors, based some on the traditional concepts of the symbols and some on my own more western associations. You will probably benefit more from your own reactions to the word/picture metaphors, and contemplating whatever "comes to you" or "pops into your head", than by forcing any "correct" interpretation, according me or to tradition. Many of my ideas may very well be "wrong" in terms of traditional Chinese Medicine, and those for whom these cultural meanings are familiar can simply disregard my mistakes. But I suggest that you first see what the symbols elicit in you, and what they tell you about yourself. Refer to my explanations and questions as an example of how you might derive meaning from the metaphors. Finally, you might do some of your own research into the original traditional texts as a further resource for your own insight, rather than as an authority which dictates the "correct" interpretation.

In TFH we use ten traditional metaphors associated with each of the Five Elements. I have integrated an 11th metaphor cycle from my study of the phases of cognitive and philosophical development which I call the Faith/Worldview Metaphor Cycle. The phases of human development of beliefs and world-views correspond to a linear model of mental capacity for certain modes of thinking (cognitive development) as well as progression through stages of spiritual or philosophical concepts. However, I want to redefine this model for our use as not merely a hierarchical structure of increasingly "better" beliefs. I do think there is a tendency for people to develop along this linear progression of beliefs corresponding to cognitive development and spiritual enlightenment, yet I also believe that each individual may cycle through these perspectives throughout their life and in relation to different goals or issues.

Faith/Worldview Metaphor Cycle

Each of us uses a variety of different models of reality to make sense of our experience, to make decisions, to improve performance and have more personal bests. Each of these models entails certain assumptions and ideas which we believe to be true, even though we may not be conscious of these beliefs. We may not recognize our faith in the assumptions of our own worldview as faith. We might want to simply call it "Reality". We might just say, “that’s just how life is.” When I use the word Faith I want to define it as the process by which we actively construct our personal world-view, the set of beliefs which allow each of us to have meaning in our lived lives and make conscious decisions.

Our beliefs constitute our holistic, often largely unconscious and unarticulated conception of our experience of life, and the way the world works- what is really real, and what laws govern what is possible. For me, Faith is the active spiritual element in our walk of consciously striving to discover and be aware of the truest, deepest, most powerful meaning in our lives and to develop our belief, actions, and way of being to be in harmony with these truths. This can take the form of a personal relationship as with prayer with God or Jesus. Our beliefs/worldview and Faith are the fundamental force which shapes our experience and perception, our priorities and passions in life. It can be seen to progress in stages through the life span, but it is also ever changing, evolving, and cycling through different phases. Our beliefs and faith may be in different phases for different issues or aspects of our life. By contemplating an open system of metaphors that have been used for 5000 years, we can gain insight into and awareness of our own beliefs in general, and in relation to specific life issues and goals.

The Organ Function Metaphors

It should be noted that the Chinese conceptions of the Organ Functions differ significantly from the traditional western medical conception of the functions of the actual physical organs. In traditional Chinese philosophy, Organs are seen as metaphors, symbolic representations of FUNCTIONS. It is the Organ Function which is said to create the physical organ rather than the physical structure dictating the function. Physical organs are a Phenomenon, or expressions of Organ Functions, not mechanistic structures that can be fully understood through anatomical dissection. The actual mechanism will never be fully understood, but can be appreciated through a holistic conception of the Organ Function metaphor.

In TFH we are comfortable with imprecise, or subjective understanding because we only use SAFE energy balancing reflexes, and emphasize that each person must be aware of themselves, and take responsibility to avail themselves of professional healers when they find that they need more help than TFH can provide. We do TFH as a daily hygiene, not as a medical treatment of a disease. We benefit from the subjective, imprecise nature of the metaphors, because each individual is unique, and so requires a unique interpretation of the metaphor in relation to their life experience. There is no fixed, "correct" answer, only answers which ring true for the person at the moment.
Organ functions are Global. They take place in the whole person and in every cell. Each cell in the human being has all the functions of the 5 elements. Physical malfunction of a specific organ may not correspond to energy imbalance of the Organ Function in the whole Soul. Likewise, energy imbalance of an Organ Function may not be reflected in the physical organ. This would mean that you could have a malfunction or injury in the foot that results in an imbalance in the energy of the Liver Function. This does not indicate that injury to the foot has caused direct damage to the liver, but rather that the Liver Functions of the cells of the foot are communicating a subtle energy block that may be alleviated using the reflexes, or the metaphors of the Liver Functions.

My experience over the many years I have been using and developing the TFH system has shown me that even serious pathology of an organ will not always show a muscle indicator inhibition or over facilitation for the associated meridian. The cells making up that physical organ can have other meridian energy imbalances blocking the healing energy flow and allowing pathology of the organ. In using TFH we are more interested in helping the person select and obtain personal goals than in working with named diseases, pathologies or injuries directly. You may be able to reach your goal without having a disappearance of the pathology, or you may have a balancing of energy which will in turn allow the internal healing system to function and resolve the pathology. Think of the Organ Metaphor not in terms of any discrete physical organ, but in terms of the associated Function as a symbol for what is happening in your life.

If you are aware of a diagnosed pathology of an organ or of any kind, be sure to consult a professional who is qualified to work within the biomedical model of diagnosis and medical treatment. You can use TFH to supplement medical treatment by contemplating what an ailment means in your life, or what the scientific facts symbolize in metaphorical terms. A heart attack, or liver disease or even a sore throat has more than physical meaning. We can use TFH to consider how our knowledge of diagnosed conditions resonates emotionally, spiritually, and symbolically within the whole context of our lives, to alleviate associated stress, and to balance our energy for optimal function of our immune system. In the context of TFH, these metaphors are not taken literally to reflect the clinical status of a physical organ. Rather, we examine the meanings that we attach to the organs and explore how those meanings might also reflect some aspect of our experience of our lives. Some Western physiological conceptions of organ functions are integrated into this discussion as another possible source of meaningful metaphors, and by no means as a resource for diagnosing organ based physical conditions.

Muscle Metaphors
Muscles are not used in isolation. For every muscle that contracts, some muscles must relax or be inhibited, some muscles must fix the origin and other muscles must also become active to allow smooth motion in the specific direction desired. The TFH muscle tests utilize a general position that partially isolates a specific muscle, putting other muscles in a less active mode. We will get the best results if we also feel the muscle contracting while the test is being preformed. Try to become aware of the specific muscle as you perform the range of motion. Once you have a conscious and kinetic sense of the range of motion, try to be aware of any thoughts or feelings which come to mind. Think of what kind of action this motion suggests. Does the literal activity correspond to your life or your goal? What might the activity symbolize in your life?

Think of the motion and what that suggests to you. Then, if you need some inspiration, check if the explanation of the muscle action and the sample questions seem to mean something to you. Does anything "pop into your head"? Maybe you can contemplate that, even if it doesn’t seem to have any direct, literal relation to the muscle action accept your free association, intuition or subtle internal communication.

The metaphors are mostly used during the energy balancing and might also be referred to when discussing the outcome of the balancing, but after the balancing, our focus is on the specific meanings for the individual person, rather than the metaphors per se. This allows the person being helped to tell his or her story and discover where their passions are and where they are wounded, damaged or in denial.

Learning to use metaphors effectively involves practice of listening and other communication skills. This may be interpersonal communication, or communication with ourselves, self-awareness. The person seeking help will often have conscious insights related to the metaphors, but also reveal things they might not be aware of through body language, tone of voice, etc. The person acting as helper has important role in observing responses that the individual may not perceive, may be blind to, or may be in denial about. However, we maintain the self-responsibility model. The helper is only offers their observations as possibilities. It is up to the individual to decide on their own meaning (to own their own feelings).

The helper strives to be attentive. The unique subjective experiences of the individual make the parable, the meaningful story, the life they are living, special and unique. With each metaphor we allow the person to evaluate their subjective balance in relation to the feeling, issue, or story that the metaphor brings to mind. We use TFH to help the person become aware of their imbalances, to become more balanced and have the ability to function fully, fulfilling their mission, using their talents and finding their destiny.

Listening to the whole person, we try to hear not only facts, but emotions, incongruences and conflicts, issues of passion and areas of imbalance. We are almost guaranteed success in this exercise if our fundamental effort is to respect the person as important to the whole world by just being who they are at the moment, and to communicate this appreciation. Each person has transcendent value because a power greater than them is working through them. Our efforts at self-awareness and energy balancing are to come into harmony with this great power that we are a part of. We may call this Universal Energy which gives us life and connects us with all creation Chi, Ki, Prana, Holy Spirit, Innate Intelligence, Holy Spirit. For me Jesus the Christ is the personification of that energy in human form. Jesus often spoke in parables, symbolic stories which have many interpretations according to our needs when we interpret them. We might respect our own symbol-stories as coming from that same source which is also within us, and find direction and meaning in life through their contemplation.
Does that ring a bell? Seem to have some meaning in this context? Make you think of anything? Bring anything to mind? Do you know what that is for you? What could that be an emblem for—a metaphor symbolizing what? First look inside yourself for your own association with the metaphor, then consider our interpretations of the Traditional Chinese meanings of the symbols and see what response that elicits from you, whether that meaning "fits" in any way. Finally, do some further study of the metaphors but with the purpose of enriching your own self understanding, rather than forcing your life to fit any "fixed" and "correct" meanings for the metaphors.

The Central and Governing Meridians

The Central and Governing meridians relate to the balance of stored energy and the energy leaving the Soul (the whole person). The Governing and Central Meridians are closely associated with the Lung Meridian because they relate to the breath cycle in which subtle energy and air are drawn into and released from the Soul, but they related to all of the Elements and Organs. The Supraspinatus and Teres Major muscles are used as indicators of the Central and Governing meridians, respectively. These are the first two muscles that are balanced (restored to a facilitated state, testing strong). When the used and stored energy is in balance, then the excess or over energy in any of the other meridians will be more easily brought into balance. This will allow the greatest change and attract those people and things that will allow the fulfillment of our purposes.

Central Meridian Function

The Central Meridian/Conception Vessel is where the used energy is stored prior to being released with the breath on exhaling. All the other meridians have connections with it for releasing the excess and/or used energy. The associated metaphor is of letting go of a previously useful idea, thing, emotion, heuristic truth, worldview etc. It is a short meridian and we use a small muscle (the supraspinatus) as an indicator. Releasing of little, or subtle things can be of great importance to allow new things to occur in your life. Think of exhaling, and letting go of things that once served you, but can now be released. The Central Meridian is related to the Brain Functions of the innate intelligence of the whole Soul in each of the cells and in the overall coordination of your internal wisdom. These are the functions of doing some things automatically (or autonomically), while doing other things consciously; doing more than one thing at a time and changing what you're doing as circumstances change.

What subtle, small thing or idea do you need to release to reach your goal?

Muscle: SUPRASPINATUS

This muscle is a small one related to the shoulder and lifting the arm in a forward position.

Feel this small muscle contracting on top of the shoulder under the neck muscle (under the upper trapezius). This is a subtle feeling. The supraspinatus is a deep muscle. If you feel a muscle contracting or straining elsewhere, check the position of the test or consider the supraspinatus inhibited. If a muscle is not fully facilitated, it may recruit other muscles to compensate.

What do you need to let go of, particularly some small, subtle thing, that worked for you in the past but is not useful now?

Governing Meridian Function

The Governing meridian is connected with all the other meridians including the Central/Conception vessel. It is a storage vessel for excess or used energy before this energy is released with the breath. Prior to using the other muscles as indicators of imbalances in the Soul (the whole person), it is important to uncover/release this stored energy by considering the burdens that a person is literally or figuratively carrying.

The Governing Meridian is associated with the function of standing and Spine Function. It may also be related to Pineal Function that relates to the day/night cycles of light and darkness.

What transitions are you coping with, or do you need to make? What subtle or dramatic shifts in energy allocation are you making or do you need to make? How do you feel about nighttime vs. daytime? What is your favorite season? What are you carrying that has become a burden? How can you transition or transform your burden so that it is helpful and not hindering to you?

Muscle: TERES MAJOR—
This is a small muscle of the back of the shoulder, when it isn’t working at its optimum (as indicated by testing facilitated/strong) the shoulders tend to slump forward as if you were carrying a weight or heavy burden, literally and metaphorically. This muscle is particularly related to pineal organ function that relates to the day/night cycles of light and darkness.

Feel this small muscle contracting between the top of your arm and the bottom of the shoulder blade.

What burden or weight needs to be removed from your life? How do you envision the burden? Is it a heavy load, a mass of chains, a person? How will you get that off your back? Will you set it down or throw it off? Do you need help to remove your burden? What transitions are you coping with, or do you need to make? What subtle or dramatic shifts in energy allocation are you making or do you need to make? How can you transition or transform your burden so that it is helpful and not hindering to you?

The Earth Element
Stomach And Spleen Meridians

The Earth Element metaphor corresponds to the ground, the soil, the dirt. The Fire element gives birth to Earth, symbolized by ashes which return to the earth. Earth in turn gives birth to metal, symbolized by the salts, minerals and ores which form in the earth. The Earth Element is controlled by Wood which is symbolized by the roots of trees holding the earth in place. The Earth Element in turn controls water by containing it, giving it form, as in a lake or a river. The Earth Element is associated with the Season of Late Summer, and is said to be a time of Transition not only between summer and autumn, but also between each of the seasons. The Direction associated with the Earth Element is not North, South, East or West, but Center. Thus, the Five Elements are sometimes represented with the Earth Element at the center, with the other four Elements at the cardinal directions.

Do you feel like you have your feet on the ground or do you need to be more grounded and centered? In your current phase of change, do you feel like you have enough roots to nourish your growth and enough stability to give form to your dreams (Water Element)?

The Color metaphor associated with the Earth Element is Yellow.

What does the color yellow mean to you in your life? Related to your current life goals, what might the color yellow represent?

Yellow might correspond to the Season metaphor of the Earth Element which is Late Summer, the time of ripening or maturing of the crops and of the early harvest. We might picture fields of crops waiting to be harvested, or the action of harvesting of crops.

Is it time for you to begin to reap the harvest of what you have sewn, or do you need to let things develop a little longer? What in your life needs harvesting, and what needs to be allowed a little more time to mature?

The Climate metaphor of the Earth Element is Dampness or Humidity. We might picture a climate where we perspire without any real exertion. We can think of steam, fog, or mist.

What might humidity, steam, fog or mist symbolize in your life? Do you need a little more steam to reach your goals, or is there some fog which is hampering your progress?

The Odor metaphor for the Earth Element is Fragrant. We might think of taking time to smell the flowers, to appreciate the pleasant and enjoyable aspects of life. One traditional association with the Fragrant metaphor is the smell of incense in spiritual or cultural celebrations. We might think of the smells we associate with our own family or cultural holidays.

What does a Fragrant smell symbolize in your life? Are you taking enough time to "stop and smell the flowers"--appreciate the Fragrance in your life--or do you need to focus on following through with your work, making that final effort to bring in the harvest?

The Taste metaphor of the Earth Element is Sweet. This can be related to all the senses in addition to the sensation of pleasure in the mouth. Sweet can be a pleasing smell as with Fragrance, a sound that is melodious or harmonious to the ear as with Singing, a pleasing, beautiful, well-formed vision for the eye, or even a characteristic of being amiable, good-natured, gentle, welcome or Sympathetic. The metaphor of a Sweet Taste can symbolize many aspects of our life in addition to the literal sweet taste of foods and the possible dietary, social, cultural and other meanings tastes can have for us.

What tastes Sweet in your life, or in relation to your goals? Do need to have more, or just appreciate more, the sweet aspects of your life in order to achieve your goals?

The Emotion metaphor of the Earth Element is Sympathy or Empathy. This is the emotion of compassion that involves sharing of feelings with another and/or understanding another's feelings or experience and responding appropriately. This can be an expression of condolence and comforting in times of grief or sadness, but it can also be a spirit of kinship,
How might Sympathy or Empathy be related to your goals? Are you being too sympathetic or empathetic and losing sight of your own feelings and needs, or do you need to relate more to how others are feeling, or do you need more/less empathy/sympathy from others?

The Sound metaphor of the Earth Element is Singing. The metaphor of singing involves uttering and/or hearing of words with rhythmic or musical modulation of the voice. As with the metaphor of Empathy, it can express, relate to, or inspire any of the Emotions. The idea of singing can simply mean uttering an expressive sound. Singing relates to self-expression and understanding of others. We all have moments when we need sing, to proclaim our own feelings, or feel the need for enthusiastic praise from others. A person with a recurring imbalance of the Singing aspect of the Earth Element often says, “I can’t sing” or, “I never sing.” This may relate literally to hidden wounds related to actual singing ability, or it may have to do with our ability to express ourselves, to be understood, or to understand others.

What does Singing mean to you in your life, or in relation to your goal? Do you feel like you ”sing” or tell too much, or do you need more enthusiastic, expressive singing in your life?

The Earth Element is said to Fortify the Muscles. The Muscles symbolize movement and activity. To Fortify the Muscles might make you stronger, more developed, or more powerful.

What role does Muscle or strength play in your goals? Do you need more power, movement or activity to reach your goals or do you need to focus more on centeredness, stillness and patience?

The Personal Power metaphor of the Earth Element is Decrease. There is a point in our lives when less is more and we need to let go of some things to have more power in our own life. There are many aspects of cutting back or gradual diminution in our lives that allow us to be more effective and more authentic.

What in your life is no longer necessary, fruitful or beneficial that you continue to keep or do out of habit or fear of change? What can you let go of that would allow you to have more Personal Power in your life?

The Faith/Worldview metaphor of the Earth Element relates to Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood. Structure and function are seen in context. Systems are seen to reflect flexible and multiple purposes. This is a transitional phase characterized by disillusionment with literalism and blind acceptance of rules. Instead we increase our abilities of abstract thinking and reflection upon the self and one’s own actions from multiple/others’ perspectives. It can be called the Conventional/Synthetic Faith Worldview.

Are you placing too little or too much reliance on the values of your peer group, community or culture and seeing yourself through the eyes of others? Are you bogged down and stuck in your own thoughts and feelings, or are you in denial of your true inner thoughts and feelings about your experience of life?

Stomach Meridian Function 7-9 AM

The Stomach Function involves receiving potential nutrients and beginning the digestive functions. The 35 million cells in the stomach have multiple functions. The Stomach Function is taking in new materials and new ideas, mixing them and temporarily storing them for further assimilation. It is a moment in the cycle of seeing what is available and tagging it for use in other functions of the Soul. The Stomach Meridian is particularly associated with the mouth as the beginning of the digestive system, but must necessarily involve the sense of smell, vision, etc. As it is often said, digestion truly begins in the brain and the Stomach Function has a strong mental/emotional component as well as a dietary component. We come into first contact with potential nutrients and new ideas through what we see, smell or hear and digestion occurs best when it involves a full appreciation with the five senses. Sometimes we don’t see what we’re taking in (watch what we eat), or we swallow something without chewing, or without realizing that it’s poison. We may need to think more about what we’re taking in, or even vomit it up, or at least allow ourselves the time to digest it, whether it's a food, a feeling, a thought, etc.

Are you receiving the proper resources to fulfill your purposes? Are you able to use your resources efficiently? What nutrient, emotion, or idea are you digesting? What is difficult for you to swallow or gives you a stomachache (physical, emotional, etc) or inhibits free breathing, figuratively or literally?
Muscles Associated with the Stomach Meridian

Muscle: PECTORALIS MAJOR CLAVICULAR—
This chest muscle helps bend and turn the arm at the shoulder. Contracting this muscle also elevates and opens the chest. This muscle is particularly associated with the Stomach Meridian Function (and emotional function) of processing and digesting incoming material. We prefer to start balancing with the Stomach meridian after the Central and Governing meridians because the emotional/digestive component is so frequently a crucial component in our goal-balancing process.

Feel this muscle contracting at the top of your chest between the shoulder and the area below the collarbone.

In relation to your goal, do you need to hold your chest up and be more proud or are you too proud?

Muscle: LEVATOR SCAPULAE—
This muscle has its origin in the first four cervical vertebrae. It has a major role in keeping the head held up and even. Inhibition in these muscles can result in the head dropping forward, and or twisting or tilting to one side.

Feel this muscle contracting between your mid neck and the outer top of the shoulder blade, deep in that area.

Are you having difficulty keeping your head on straight literally or figuratively? Would you say that you have your nose too high in the air or don’t seem to be able to hold your head high?

Muscle: NECK MUSCLES
NOTE: There are so many muscles involved in the neck that it is a very subtle practice trying to isolate, sense and test any individual muscle. This parallels the relation of the neck muscles to the stomach meridian which is associated with emotions. The neck muscles are all involved in the subtle changes in facial expressions involved in emotions. Pay attention to the facial expressions when testing the neck muscles and see what metaphors are generated.

(Anterior Neck flexors)-
These muscles are found in the front and sides of the neck. They help to hold the head up and keep the ears and shoulders level. They are particularly vulnerable to injury from whiplash. They are also related to the functioning of the sinuses, which are important in drainage from the head and scalp as well as immune responses.

Feel these muscles contracting in the front and anterior sides of your neck as you bring your head forward.

Are you having trouble holding your head up, literally or figuratively? Are you looking at things evenly, or are you tilted to one side? Have you suffered any literal or figurative whiplash? How is the air effecting you? Is it literally or figuratively stale, fresh, stinky, or fragrant? Is your head (life) clogged, literally or figuratively, or are you feeling a steady flow of fresh air to clear your head?

(Posterior Neck Extensors)
These muscles are found in the back and sides of the neck. They help to hold the head back over the shoulders. If they are inhibited, the head tends to pull forward like a turtle sticking its head out.

Feel these muscles contracting at the back of your neck and the posterior sides of your neck as you bring your head back.

Observe your posture. Are you literally sticking your neck out? Figuratively, are you taking too many risks, or do you need to take more chances?

Muscle: BRACHIORADIALIS—
This muscle flexes the elbow and helps turn the wrist. If it is inhibited, it may be difficult to get the arm up and behind the back.

Feel this small muscle contracting between your arm and forearm at the Elbow when the when the thumb is pointed to the shoulder.

Are you able to reach back behind you to get important things done? Can you scratch your own back or are there areas where you're dependent on others? Do you feel like someone is twisting your arm behind your back, or is there something going on behind your back that you can't "get a hold on"? Are you flexible in your outlook, or only looking straight ahead, ignoring things in your blindspot?

Spleen Meridian Function 9-11 AM
While the stomach receives raw materials, the spleen functions to transform them into useable forms and to distribute them. It is a moment in the cycle of assimilating what is appropriate and identifying toxic or harmful elements to be eliminated. Spleen Function also relates to immune functions, purifying the blood, increasing power of the white blood cells and removing the damaged and dead red blood cells.
Pancreas function is also related to the Spleen Meridian and is involved in sugar metabolism, particularly, and digestion in general, breaking things down into manageable parts.

Are you burdening yourself with toxic materials and overworking the detox/immune system function in dietary, mental, chemical or spiritual areas? Do you have enough sweetness or too much sweetness? How are you at breaking down problems into digestible parts?

**Muscles Associated with the Spleen Meridian**

**Muscle: LATISSIMUS DORSI**
This muscle extends from the back from the hip to the spine and to the shoulder and is involved in all the movements of the arm across the front of the body. When it is out of balance posture is effected from the shoulders to the pelvis. This muscle is particularly associated with Pancreas function, having to do with sugar metabolism and digestion in general. The digestion metaphor has to do with breaking things down into manageable parts.

Feel this muscle contracting at the side of the back when the elbow is held tightly against the body, arm straight, with the thumb pointing to the back.

**Muscle: MIDDLE TRAPEZIUS**
This is one of the muscles that keeps the shoulder blade in and turns it. The motion of the test suggests opening your arms as wide as possible to take in or embrace as much as possible. This muscle is particularly associated with Spleen Meridian Function which relates to immune functions and cleaning up the blood increasing power of the white blood cells function and removing the damaged and old red blood cells. How are you doing with keeping your act cleaned up?

Feel this muscle contracting between the posterior part of the shoulder and the spine from the middle of the spine to the neck with your arms fully extended at shoulder level and brought back toward the spine, palms facing forwards.

**Muscle: LOWER TRAPEZIUS**
This is one of the muscles that keeps the shoulder blade in and turns it. The motion of the test suggests opening your arms above you to grasp or hold up something above you. This muscle is particularly associated with Spleen Meridian Function which relates to immune functions and cleaning up the blood increasing power of the white blood cells function and removing the damaged and old red blood cells. How are you doing with keeping your act cleaned up?

Feel this muscle contracting between the posterior part of the shoulder and the spine from the middle of the spine to area when the low back curve begins with your arms fully extended and brought back toward the spine and slightly towards your feet, palms facing the head.

**Muscle: OPPONENS POLLICIS LONGUS**
This test gives us an indication of the relative function of the grip of the opposing little finger and thumb. This muscle is particularly associated with Pancreas function, having to do with sugar metabolism and digestion functions of breaking things down into manageable parts, and separating what is useful and what is not.

Feel this muscle contracting at the palm side of the thumb when holding the little finger and thumb together.

**Muscle: TRICEPS**
This muscle at the back of the arm helps to straighten the arm, working opposite the biceps. The motion of the test suggests reaching out or drawing in. This muscle is particularly associated with Pancreas function, having to do with sugar metabolism and digestion in general. The digestion metaphor has to do with breaking things down into manageable parts.

Feel this muscle contracting on the posterior of the arm between the elbow and the shoulder when you extend your forearm straightening it out at the elbow, hand facing the body.
Are you reaching out enough or not enough, literally or figuratively? Are you gathering in too much or too little, literally or figuratively? How are you at breaking down problems into bite size chunks?

The Metal Element

Lung and Large Intestine Meridians

The Metal Element metaphor corresponds to the hardened, condensed materials that form within the earth. The Earth element gives birth to Metal, symbolized by the condensed ores, minerals or salts which form within the earth. Metal in turn gives birth to Water which is symbolized by the condensation of water on a metal surface. Metal is controlled by Fire, which melts it and can serve to purify it and give it specific form. Metal controls Wood. In the form of a metal blade, Metal can chop wood and transform it for many purposes. The Metal Element may be associated with hardness used to protect yourself, what armor you wear, what tools or weapons you carry, or it may relate to adornment with shining metals.

Do you need a "hard shell", barriers or boundaries to protect you from the demands or aggressions of people in your life, or do you need to open up more, let down your shield or mask to communicate with people? Are you too hard or not hard enough on yourself or others? Are you too focused on adornment and appearances, or do you need to pay some attention to how you represent and communicate your inner richness and potential?

The Color metaphor associated with the Metal Element is White. White light is associated with being honorable, honest, trustworthy, etc. It may also relate to the image of a polished metal shining with reflected light.

What does the color white mean to you in your life, related to your current life goals? Do you have enough of the pure light of truth in your life, or have you been deceived by the mere appearance of truth, the brilliance of shiny things?

The Season metaphor of the Metal Element is Autumn, the time of harvest. We can imagine scenes of the last harvest and the storing of foods for the winter, the beauty of the changing colors of leaves before they drop to the ground.

What in your life is in its Autumn phase? Have you been able to harvest the fruits of your labor, or has disaster befallen your crop, or inattention allowed it to spoil?

The Climate metaphor of the Metal Element is Dryness. We might imagine a desert scene that is generally very dry, but nevertheless teeming with life that has adapted to the dry conditions. Too much dryness will even kill cactus which normally thrives in the hot, dry weather, but too much moisture, especially all of a sudden, can result in flooding and wholesale uprooting, or perhaps root rot from too much damp.

What might dryness symbolize in your life? Do you need a little more moisture for lubrication and growth or are you too damp or even flooded? Do you need to concentrate and store that which nourishes you (the life giving waters), or do you need a chance to "dry out"?

The Odor metaphor for the Metal Element is Rotten. We might imagine something that is over ripe, and beginning to decompose such as fallen leaves or fruit that has fallen unharvested. It maybe that an aspect of your life is being affected by immoral or corrupt behavior or influences. Perhaps, "something is rotten in Denmark".

What is rotten in your life? Are you simply aware of the aroma of the necessary dying of some things so that other things can grow, or have you allowed good and valuable things to become corrupt, to rot, and to go to waste?

The Taste metaphor for the Metal Element is Pungent. Imagine something that is very spicy, sharply affecting the organs of taste, even burning, or stinging. Pungent or spicy can be a metaphor for anything that is appealing, stimulating, exciting, or tantalizing in your life.

Is there enough sharpness and spice in your life or is it too hot, painful or dangerous? Do you need to "spice things up" to reach your goal, or would you be more successful if you took a more bland approach?

The Emotion metaphor of the Metal Element is Grief. You might picture yourself standing by a tombstone, suffering pain due to loss or regret. You may have made an error, lost an opportunity, lost a loved one or suffered some mishap, hardship, or a complete disaster. In our modern western culture, grieving has largely been lost as a cultural concept. We are told “Get over it”, to “move on with life,” etc. This can lead to a chronic failure to attach value to anyone or anything in our lives and a chronic callousness, hardness or indifference. Many times, in order to move on, we need to be able to recognize the damage and loss that we have suffered, express the pain, and realistically assess what we can "get over" and what we must accept as an ongoing aspect of our lives.

What has to be given up, let go, or let die so that you can reach your goals? What have you lost, or has hurt you, that you need to recognize and grieve over?

The Sound metaphor of the Metal Element is Weeping. We might picture tears running down the face of a person. These tears might be shed in sadness, fear or grief, but we can also cry for Joy or in awe, sympathy, empathy, compassion, or even
anger. Allowing tears to flow when appropriate is very healthy and helpful for our balance and wholeness. If we are too hardened to cry, this can block our life energy. If someone says, “I never cry” it may indicate unhealed wounds or an ossified siege mentality. There are times when we must “keep a stiff upper lip” to survive or get through a situation, but to deny the flow of tears completely can be toxic.

How does the sound of weeping relate to your current goals? Do you hold in too much weeping or are you prone to crying a lot or when it's not appropriate?

The Metal Element is said to Fortify the Skin and Hair. This might relate to personal grooming or attention to personal appearance. How you represent yourself as well as how you take care of yourself. The skin is a major organ and is very important for detoxification. The skin actually “breathes”. Our skin and hair can act as our “armor” or as “antennae”. We can retreat defensively within our shell, or attune ourselves to all of the vibrations we can sense with the skin and hair.

Do you take personal responsibility for your own hygiene and is that reflected in your appearance? Do you take enough, or too much responsibility for how others see you, or perceive you? Are you "thin skinned" or "thick skinned"?

The Personal Power metaphor for the Metal Element is Balance. You might imagine a set of scales as a symbol of balance, or the symbol of the yin and yang.

How do you need to be more balanced to have more personal power and achieve your goals? What aspects of your life are out of balance and decreasing your power in your own experience.

The Faith/Worldview metaphor of the Metal Element relates to Young Adulthood. In this phase all of the "parts" of our life are integrated to form a whole system. All structures and functions reflect organization of the interactive relationships. This is the phase of Responsible Faith or Individuative-Reflective belief. At this stage we begin to assume personal responsibility for our own personal lifestyle, beliefs, and attitudes. We work to construct an individual, rational, functional worldview. Symbols are considered as conceptual/metaphorical, rather than having singular, literal, fixed meaning.

Paradoxes, polarities, and complexity are a challenge at this stage as we balance our personal priorities and seek to distinguish relative and absolute truths.

Do you feel that you can take personal responsibility for your beliefs and your actions, or do you feel that your life is shaped by the roles you play for others and the meaning you have in the life of others?

Lung Meridian Function 3 to 5 AM

While we may not go without water for more than a few days, or without food for more than a week or two, we can't last without air for more than three minutes. The lungs are the chief organs of respiration and exchange of gases, mainly oxygen and carbon dioxide, serving both as a primary and essential source of life energy as well as an important channel of elimination. The lungs also supply the air for speaking and making other vocal sounds. In addition to drawing in air (oxygen), the Lung Meridian Function is said to draw in or release Chi, and regulate the status of chi in the whole Soul.

Can you breath/speak easily? Do you have a free flow of fresh air and/or inspiration to nourish the various functions of your life, or are you feeling constricted, inhibited in speaking, literally or figuratively? What do you need to lift up in your life? Are you giving too much or too little praise? Do you need to shout, cheer, or even cough something up?

Muscles Associated with the Lung Meridian

Muscle: ANTERIOR SERRATUS-
This large strong muscle draws the shoulder forward and raises the ribs. Weakness will make it difficult to push things forward with the arms straight. Chronic weakness of this muscle lets the shoulder blade pull away from the posterior chest. It is a muscle that needs to be functioning fully for ideal breathing and activities that require good breath control, and it is associated with Lung Meridian Function. Bilateral weakness is sometimes associated with neck pain, and rotating the head and neck may loosen and relieve this pain.

Feel this muscle contract on the side of the chest when you hold your arm in front of you and then reach forward with power as if you were going to punch.

Do you need to exert your power to reach your goal? Do you need to push, or punch, or are you pushing so hard that you're giving yourself a pain in the neck, or even forgetting to breath, literally or figuratively? Have you lost your voice literally or figuratively?

Muscle: CORACOBRACHIALIS-
This small shoulder muscle works with the anterior deltoid in straitening the arm when it is held over the head and in flexing the shoulder with the elbow bent, as in coming the hair. It can be associated with a lot of shoulder pain and suffering when it
is not functioning properly. As with all muscle testing in the Touch for Health System, if there is pain when attempting to feel the muscle in the testing position, consider the muscle inhibited (in need of reflex activity for restoration of full function). The test motion suggests a gesture associated with shouting, cheering, or maybe even coughing, and it is associated with Lung Meridian Function.

Feel this small muscle under the Deltoid between the front of the arm and the anterior portion of the shoulder blade when raising you hand as if to comb your hair, put on make-up or shave.

Following the metaphor of combing the hair or grooming, do you pay too much or too little attention to the details of grooming, or taking care of yourself? Is it easy to “take care” of yourself, or is it painful to care for yourself, literally or figuratively? Do you need to shout, cheer, or even cough something up? Have you lost your voice literally or figuratively?

**Muscle: DELTOIDS**
This muscle draws the arm up and away from the body, lifting the elbow. It may be involved in any shoulder problem and it is associated with Lung Meridian Function. Weakness in this muscle may make it difficult to raise the arm. It has bursae under it, between it and the bone, which can become inflamed and even have calcium deposits in these water sacs. It is important to remember that pain on movement to feel the muscle should be considered the same as weakness and utilize the reflexes for balancing and challenging procedures.

Feel this strong muscle at the top of the shoulder when you raise the arm from the side of the body toward the head.

What do you need to lift up in your life? Are you giving too much or too little praise? Do you need to lift up your arms and shout alleluia? Are you getting enough inspiration, or do you feel stale?

**Muscle: DIAPHRAGM**
This muscle separates the chest cavity from the abdominal cavity and is the chief muscle used in breathing and it is associated with Lung Meridian Function. It is essential to ease in speaking and singing. When the diaphragm is not functioning properly, it is associated with unusual symptoms because of the many neurological centers near it, as well as the holes for the esophagus, aorta, vena cava (large blood vessels) and the large lymphatic vessels. When functioning ideally, the diaphragm assists in the function of these systems.

Feel this dome shaped muscle between the spine the lower ribs and breast bone. It separates the chest cavity from the abdominal cavity. When you breathe in, it lowers and pushes the abdominal contents down. When you breathe out, it rises and helps you empty your lungs.

Can you breathe easily? Do you have a free flow of fresh air and/or inspiration to nourish the various functions of your life, or are you feeling constricted, literally or figuratively? Are you able to speak comfortably, is speaking taxing or have you lost your voice, literally or figuratively? Do you need to sing?

**Large Intestine Meridian Function 5 to 7 AM**
The Large Intestine Function is to absorb the last useful products of digestion and store the waste materials until they can be eliminated. Approximately 80% of the material entering the large intestines is absorbed, but it is mostly water. The Large Intestine Meridian Function is very important in the metabolism of water, extracting water from waste material and either reabsorbing it or sending it on to the bladder, and passing waste material as stool. It is also crucial in eliminating waste materials, as imbalance in the Large Intestine Function may result in physical, mental, emotional or spiritual toxicity.

Do you retain things you can no longer use in your life or are you letting too much go out of your life? What are you hanging onto that is toxic, literally or figuratively?

**Muscles Associated with the Large Intestine**

**Muscle: FASCIA LATA**
This very long muscle has its bulk on the pelvis and then a very thin band of tissue runs down the side of the leg to just below the knee. The fascia lata helps flex or bend the thigh, draw away from the body sideways, and keep it turned in. With weakness, the legs may tend to bow, the thigh turning outward. In walking and running it helps to align the planting of the foot. When it is not functioning ideally, the foot is turned outward and the toes are not used in the most effective way to give power to the forward thrust in walking or running. This muscle is particularly associated with the Large Intestine Meridian Function of absorbing the beneficial nutrients before waste products are passed on. Approximately 80 of the material entering the large intestines is absorbed.

Feel this muscle at the top and side of your pelvis and on the side of your leg when you turn your foot inward.
Do you feel that you have power and thrust in your walk (or race) of life? Can you open your legs and still retain power/control, or can you hold your legs closed if you want to, literally or figuratively? Do you tend to throw the baby out with the bath water, or you hanging on to material that needs to be let go?

Muscle: HAMSTRINGS-
This very strong muscle on the back of the thigh is very important in running and turning while running. It can be injured if not functioning optimally when running and turning the foot. It flexes and turns the leg sideways when the knee is bent. Inhibition in this muscle is associated with bow-legged or knock-kneed posture, as well as toxicity and headaches. This muscle is particularly associated with the Large Intestine Meridian Function of absorbing the beneficial nutrients before waste products are passed on. Approximately 80 of the material entering the large intestines is absorbed.

Feel this large muscle on the back of your thigh between the pelvis and the knee when you straighten out your leg from a bent position. Like the triceps in the arm it is an eccentric contractor.

Do you feel that you have enough power to move and run, or are you expending too much power, literally or figuratively? Are you able to make changes while in full stride? Has a change/shift while in full motion caused you some strain, injury or discomfort, literally or figuratively? Do you tend to throw the baby out with the bath water, or you hanging on to material that needs to be let go?

Muscle: QUADRATUS LUMBORUM-
This muscle flexes the vertebral column sideways, drawing it toward the hip. It assists the action of the diaphragm in breathing. It is a major stabilizing muscle of the low back. It is a very strong muscle and is very important when any back pain is present. When it isn’t functioning properly it can effect the function of the diaphragm, and so can be associated with almost any symptom.

Feel this deep low back muscle contract between the lowest ribs and the top of the pelvis in the back when you tilt yourself to the side without bending forward or backward.

How are you not functioning in an upright way literally or figuratively? What is giving you a pain in the back? How do you need to give yourself greater stability? Does your work/life/goal require you to bend more than is comfortable, literally or figuratively? Could you benefit from some flexibility and being able to bend like a reed in the wind, yielding, yet strong?

The Water Element

Bladder and Kidney Meridians
The Water Element is symbolized by the water of the oceans, seas, lakes, and rivers. The Metal Element is said to create water which we might visualize as water condensing on a cold metal surface, or bubbling up from the same depths in the earth where ores and salts are condensed. Water is controlled by the Earth which contains it and gives it form, and water controls fire by quenching it. Water is very mysterious and can take many forms. It is a symbol of the unconscious, of our dreamlife, of our emotions, of that which we do not understand and that which we fear. But it is also essential to our daily living and smooth functioning.

What does Water symbolize for you in your life or in the context of your goals? Is there too much mystery, fear and risk, or do you need to overcome your fears and allow some uncertainty to fulfill your dreams?

The Color associated with the Water Element is Blue. We might think of a blue color in water.

What does the color blue mean to you in your life or in relation to your current goals?

The Season associated with the Water Element is Winter. We might visualize a time of hibernation or a time of bleakness. It can be seen as time of reintegration and repair and preparation for the coming time of planting and new beginnings. It is a time of decreased activity and greater attention to rest and internal reflection.

What does Winter mean in your life or related to your goals? Are you too active when you need to concentrate on quiet contemplation or planning? Do you feel left out in the cold, or do you have a warm, protected place where you are safe and nurtured?

The Climate metaphor for the Water Element is Cold. We might picture the cold weather of winter, or a person who is “cold”, apathetic, unemotional, lacking personal warmth.

What does Cold symbolize in your life or in relation to your goal? Are you numbed by a harsh environment, or do you need to cool your passions and be calm to achieve your objectives?

The Odor metaphor for the Water Element is Putrid. Imagine decaying flesh, which has a very foul, strong odor. Perhaps there is something in your life that has died and needs to be laid to rest. Or perhaps there is some decay or corruption in your life that is intolerable or may be fatal.
What does a Putrid or Stagnant smell signify in your life, or in relation to your goal? What has died and needs to be buried? What is thoroughly corrupt, offensively or disgustingly objectionable?

The Taste metaphor of the Water Element is Salty. The salinity of our blood plasma is almost precisely that of seawater, yet we cannot drink seawater and we must be careful about our salt intake. Salt is used to enhance the flavor of things, and also as a preservative, preventing meat, in particular, from becoming spoiled. We sometimes say, “take this with a grain of salt” when some information in not completely reliable.

What does a Salty Taste mean in your life and in relation to your goal? What needs to be preserved in your life, materially, spiritually, intellectually? What "needs some salt" or must be "taken with a grain of salt"?

The Emotion associated with the Water Element is Fear, Anxiety or Awe. We might picture the vast, unknown depths of the sea, or the deep fears within our subconscious and dreams.

What Fears do you have related to your goals in life? Is there too much mystery, fear and risk, or do you need to overcome your fears and allow some uncertainty to fulfill your dreams? Are you worrying too much, or do you need to pay attention to the dangers in your life?

The Sound metaphor of the Water Element is Groaning. Imagine a deep, inarticulate, sound expressing fear, pain, sympathy, anger, reluctance, or even joy or pleasure. Groaning can include deep sighs, moaning, grumbling, whining, etc.

What do you need to Groan about, or are you groaning, or complaining too much? What kind of Groaning would correspond to how you feel about your life? How are you Groaning as you work towards your goal? How will you Groan when you reach your goal?

The Water Element is said to Fortify the Bones. The bones create a structure that allows the muscles to move us in a highly controlled way. The bones also serve to protect some of our vital organs such as the brain, heart and lungs. The bones function as a hydraulic system that gains strength when the pressure is greatest and becomes more flexible as the pressure is released. When we have deep emotions, or strong intuition, we sometimes say that we “feel it in the bones.” The bones are the slowest to decay, and often remain long after something has died.

What do your Bones tell you about your life and your current goals? Can you be rigid when you need to be, and flexible when it's appropriate? Do you have any "skeletons in your closet"?

The Personal Power Metaphor of the Water element is Emphasize. Imagine having reduced your efforts and activities to an optimum functional level. Now think of placing your main emphasis on a particular aspect of your life that best expresses who you are and what your purpose is.

What particular aspect of your life do you need to emphasize to reach your goal? Where are you putting too much emphasis so that it interferes with your energy flow? Is there something that you know will help you achieve your purpose which is being neglected?

The Faith/World View metaphor of the Water Element is related to Late Maturity and Death. It is characterized by a worldview of Integrative Diversity and involves the final integration into our life of a goal achieved, and the relinquishing of the old life that has been changed by changed circumstances. This is the phase of Reintegrative Universalizing Faith. In this phase, we rehabilitate all of the aspects of ourselves that have been left undeveloped, ignored, evaded, or denied. Paradoxes and Polar opposites are not seen as puzzles to be solved, but mysteries to be accepted and appreciated. Humans are seen as BOTH good and evil, shaped by circumstances AND personally responsible for their choices. God is personal and abstract. We sense a transcendent value of faith and community among all humanity and tend to sacrifice the personal, individual life for the benefit of all. This sense is extended in the “universalizing” stage to a fellowship among all beings and a connection with the ultimate environment.

How does your sense of the Universal relate to your life and to your present goals? Is this a time for you to let go of concern for personal success, failure, contradiction, or injustice and simply concentrate on the greater good, or do you need be proactive in your own interests?

Bladder Meridian Function 3-5 PM

The Bladder Function is to store waste liquid before elimination, not only in the urinary bladder but also in all of the cells and throughout the Soul. In the Chinese system, the Bladder is said to be the storehouse of emotions, and so the Bladder Function is involved in the water balance/emotional balance in the whole Soul. Water is eliminated as it reaches excessive volume, or when waste material is highly concentrated.

The urinary bladder is always “full” since the muscles expand or contract as more liquid is received from the kidneys. People often try to reduce the need to urinate by limiting their water intake, but are actually thwarted by the resulting concentration of the urine. By drinking more pure water, the bladder is actually strengthened through exercise of the expanding bladder muscles and there is actually LESS urgency to urinate since the waste materials are diluted. Water is a potent symbol for emotion and mystery in life, and the Bladder Function is also involved in the balance of mystery in the Soul. We sometimes try to eliminate mystery, ambiguity or emotion itself from our lives, only to become toxic in our
certainties and rationalizations. When we are able to accept more of the vast mystery of existence, and allow our emotions to flow, we find our tolerance and flexibility are increased.

Although all of the Meridians have secondary pathways, the Bladder Meridian is the only one to have two main channels, and it is the longest Meridian, running in double channels along the full length of the spine.

Are you hydrated, lubricated and feeling a free flow of energy, or are you dry, tight, concentrated or inhibited? Are you able to stretch? What is an irritant, or is too highly concentrated and needs dilution and/or elimination? What emotion do you need to let flow? How are you coping with mystery, duality, paradox, or imperfections?

Muscles Associated with the Bladder Meridian

Muscle: PERONEUS
These muscles making up the Peroneal group are associated with the maintaining of foot and ankle balance. When they are inhibited, they can effect the entire posture by not allowing proper use of the foot which results in an upward misuse and alignment of the entire posture.

Feel this group of muscles between the foot and the outer side of the calf when the little toe side of the foot is elevated as if trying to bring it toward the nose.

How are you mis-stepping literally or figuratively? Do you feel grounded and able to walk freely or do you need to watch your step? Are you using too much caution, pussyfooting around?

Muscle: SACROSPINALIS
- When these muscles are working in a balanced manner, you can lie on your belly and raise your entire chest off the ground in a posterior arch. This action helps the spinal discs get proper nourishment. These many small muscles work together to help keep the whole back erect. Weakness in these muscles is associated with 19 different areas of pain.

Feel these muscles, many small ones around the spine, when you lift your head backward and arch your entire spine to the back.

What little things are causing you tension? What little things are keeping you from standing straight, literally or figuratively. Do you pay too much or too little attention to details?

Muscle: TIBIALS-
- These muscles function to flex the foot out and upward. They are sometimes found inhibited when there are problems with the natural arches of the foot. These muscles are particularly associated with the urethra function of emptying the bladder and, in men, carrying the prostatic fluid/semen during ejaculation. The urethra is enwrapped by the prostate gland in men.

Anterior Tibial:

Feel this muscle on the outer side of the shinbone when you bring the big toe side of your foot toward your knee. Is it painful for you to release/let go of even toxic parts of your life? Do you have any issues around climaxing or orgasm, literally or figuratively?

Posterior Tibial:
- This muscle is also sometimes associated with Triple Warmer Meridian and the adrenal function of ”fight or flight” and the heat of passions.

Feel this muscle behind the shinbone when the foot is flexed away or down and inward.

How are you losing your balance? When you are thrown off balance do you recover quickly enough or not quickly enough for the situation or context? Are you kicking/being kicked, literally or figuratively? Is it painful for you to release/let go of even toxic parts of your life? Do you have any issues around climaxing or orgasm, literally or figuratively? Are you running for fighting to maintain your passion (for what)?

Kidney Meridian Function 5-7 PM

The Kidney Meridian Function is involved in controlling the volume, composition, and pressure of fluids in all the cells as well the whole Soul and is important in growth, development and reproductive functions. Blood flows through the kidneys at its highest pressure, toxins are filtered out, and nourishing materials are directed to where they are needed. Water is symbolic of mystery, emotion and spirit. Kidney Meridian Function is involved in the balance of these aspects of life. In Chinese medicine the Kidney is also said to be a storehouse of life force and has a strong spiritual aspect.

Where are you feeling pressure in your life, literally or figuratively? Are you bringing in enough fresh clear water to keep your life composition and volume in balance spiritually, emotionally, or physically? Do you feel that you have sufficient vitality for continued growth and development, or are you operating on reserve energy and just surviving?
Muscles Associated with the Kidney Meridian

Muscle: PSOAS-
This muscle both flexes the thigh on the trunk and the trunk on the thigh, thus it has paradoxical origins and insertions depending on the action in which it is used. This muscle is used both in sitting up motions and kicking to the side, or sidestepping motions. This muscle is particularly associated with the Kidney Meridian Function of maintaining the balance of the volume, composition, and pressure of fluids in each cell, as well as the body as a whole.

Feel this muscle contracting between the inside lateral portion of all the lumbar vertebrae and the inner portion of the upper thigh at the groin. The Quadriceps muscle is a synergistic muscle and if it is painful or felt strongly contracting in the test position use caution and consider this an indicator of an inhibition of the Psoas.

What does the motion of kicking suggest to you, literally or figuratively? Is there any paradoxical aspect to your goal? Is there something you need to "sit up" and take notice of? In what aspect of your life do you feel the most pressure, literally or figuratively? Are you drinking enough water, or doing what you need to do for purification, spiritually, emotionally, mentally or physically?

Muscle: UPPER TRAPEZIUS-
This muscle tilts the chin and pulls in the shoulder blade. This muscle is also associated with symptoms related to the eyes and ears and when they are present the inhibition may be found with repeated muscle testing.

Feel this muscle contracting when tilting your head to the side with the nose pointing straightforward and raising your shoulder to the ear. It is a superficial muscle and quite strong.

How do you feel that your head isn't on straight? Do you have difficulty "seeing straight" or keeping your head straight, literally or figuratively?

Muscle: ILIACUS-
The motion of this muscle test suggests kicking something aside. It is a small muscle that never the less may affect a wide range of movements. This muscle is also associated with the function of the transfer of nutrients and wastes from the small intestine and large intestine at the cecum. When these functions are not normal it can result in symptoms almost anywhere. When vague symptoms are present this muscle may be an indicator of this energy imbalance in the subtle energy functions of the kidney meridian and its relationship to the large intestine meridian in all of the cells. This may be thought of as subtle energy imbalances in the process of eliminating waste material.

Feel this muscle inside the pelvis contracting at its attachment on the inside of the femur when the knee is bend at ninety degrees on the thigh and the foot and leg are turned to the side of the body as far as possible.

Is there something that needs to be kicked aside, or do you feel kicked aside? Are you throwing away things that are still useful, or are you hanging on to too much waste material, or do you have waste material in the wrong place, literally or figuratively? Is a subtle aspect of your life affecting various other parts of your life in unexpected ways?

The Wood Element

Gall Bladder And Liver Meridians

The Wood Element metaphor is symbolized by green growing things. The Wood Element is fed by and springs from the water element, Which can be thought of in terms of water feeding the roots of a tree, or even the original birth of life in the water element of the ocean. The Wood Element provides fuel for the Fire Element, nourishing its growth. The Wood Element controls the Earth Element by putting roots into the ground and holding it in place. The Wood Element is controlled by the Metal Element which chops it and can destroy or transform it.

How does the image of Green growing things relate to your life and your goals? Do you have enough roots to sustain your growth, and enough fuel to sustain your passions? Do you have enough structure in your growth so that you can achieve your purposes, or do you need to allow yourself more freedom in your growth to be fulfilled?

The Color metaphor associated with the Wood Element is Green. We might associate this with the green of new buds on a plant, and with all new birth.

What does the color Green mean to you in your life, related to your current life goals? Is there enough new growth in your life, or are you giving birth to more new ideas, projects, etc. than can be sustained?

The Season metaphor for the Wood Element is Spring. This is the time of rebirth after the dying and dormancy of winter, the time to come out of hibernation, and look for new beginnings. It is time for planting seeds and developing new ideas.

What does Spring symbolize to you in your life? What in your life needs to be revived, renewed, or reborn? What seeds do you need to plant now so that you will have a bountiful harvest in the future?
The **Climate** metaphor for the Wood Element is **Wind**. The wind is mysterious and represents the unknown. We do not know when it will come or from where. Wind can be refreshing, helping us to renew our efforts, or it can be harsh and destructive, blowing us into chaos. Wind represents grace, the undeserved favor, but it can also be an undeserved injury, which is no one's fault.

**What might Wind symbolize in your life?**  Do you need a fresh start? Is there something you need to let out, to give birth to, to express your personal origins or our original intentions in beginning a certain project. We may be expending energy to achieve things that have little beginnings in life. If we feel out of touch with our own personal power, it may be very important to reconsider our own purpose and reach your goals, even if that results in some minor mishaps? Are you habitually running on reserves or do you need to “push the envelope” fulfill your motivations and the circumstances warrant this behavior.

**What does Wind symbolize in your life?**  Do you need a fresh start? Is there something you need to let go of that was useful, but is now Rancid? Do you feel stagnant physically, emotionally, mentally or spiritually? How can you get things moving smoothly?

The **Odor** associated with the Wood Element is **Rancid**, the smell of spoiled oil, or fat. We might visualize the leftover oils, leftover supplies, that have lasted the winter but now need to be replaced. This could also relate to any of the hormones which relate to all of the emotions and their regulation. We might think of the fats and oils of the body smoothing our movements, or being stagnated and rancid from lack of activity and circulation.

**What does a Rancid smell mean in your life?**  What do you need to let go of that was useful, but is now Rancid? Do you feel stagnant physically, emotionally, mentally or spiritually? How can you get things moving smoothly?

The **Taste** associated with the Wood Element is **Sour**. The **Sour** flavor can relate to good things that have gone bad, such as spoiled milk, or things that are overpowering in concentration, but delicious when sufficiently balanced or diluted, such as lemonade. It may be time to throw out the old to make room for the new, or it may be time to transform your attitude or your resources to have a positive outcome. **Sour** might also relate to a bad attitude, being grouchy, grumpy, unhappy.

**What does the Sour flavor represent in your life or related to your goal?**  Has something that was good gone bad? Do you need to transform sour lemons into lemonade?

The **Emotion** associated with the Wood Element is **Anger**. **Anger** often masks other feelings such as grief or fear. We may move into **Anger** to protect old wounds or as a reaction to fear of some danger, or perceived attack or indignity, whether physical, emotional or otherwise. If we find we habitually react in anger, it helps to recognize our grief and fears, and evaluate the appropriate object of anger and the appropriate action to take. Anger can lead to joy when we can be conscious of its source and then feed the fire for our passions for appropriate action, change or growth.

**What does Anger mean in your life, or in relation to your goals?**  Are you angry with your self or someone else? Does your anger seem to be directed at the appropriate person or thing? Do you need to awaken your outrage, or passions in general, in order grow and reach your goals?

The **Sound** associated with the Wood Element is **Shouting**. **Shouting** may be associated particularly with anger, but it can express any strong feeling. You can shout with joy, pleasure, compassion, grief, fear, awe, etc. **Shouting** may relate to giving full voice to your emotions, message or your story. It may be proclaiming joy or determination, crying out in shock or surprise, warning of danger, screaming in fear, bellowing in pain, or yelling encouragement, praise or celebration, etc. Our energy may be imbalanced if we are unable to understand and express these sounds or express them inappropriately. Shouting can be very empowering and a great release, but if we habitually shout, we may need to assess whether our motivations and the circumstances warrant this behavior.

**What does Shouting represent in your life?**  Are you able to express yourself and give full voice to your feelings and ideas? Are you "blowing a lot of hot air" out of self-importance, fear or insecurity? What do you need to shout about, or who do you need to shout at to reach your goals?

The Wood Element is said to **Fortify** the **Ligaments**. The **Ligaments** might represent the ”safety chains” for the muscles, so that if a muscle fails to function, the ligaments still hold us together. The Ligaments might represent secondary or back-up systems that prevent malfunction and mistakes in primary systems from resulting major damage.

**Are you taking proper precautions for the risks in your life, or do you need to "push the envelope" fulfill your purpose and reach your goals, even if that results in some minor mishaps? Are you habitually running on reserves or secondary systems, risking a total breakdown?**

The **Personal Power** metaphor of the Wood Element is **Birth**. We can visualize a child being born into the world, but Birth symbolizes all new beginnings for life, ideas, projects, etc. Birth may relate to the story of our own physical birth and beginnings in life. If we feel out of touch with our own personal power, it may be very important to reconsider our own origins or our original intentions in beginning a certain project. We may be expending energy to achieve things that have little or nothing to do with our dreams and aspirations.

**What does Birth symbolize in your life?**  How does the story of your own birth and early life relate to your life and this goal? Do you need a fresh start? Is there something you need to let out, to give birth to, to express your personal power or are you starting too many new things, birthing more than you can support, nourish, and enjoy?

The **Worldview/Faith** metaphor Wood Element involves the **Formistic Implicit** process model where structure and function are seen to exist separately. Processes and systems are essentially invisible and mysterious. This corresponds to the pre-faith stage of **Infancy** and the Intuitive stage of **Early Childhood**. It can be called **Intuitive-Projective Faith**. We begin to distinguish some separateness between ourselves and the world and to make use of speech and symbols to make meaning. We have difficulty seeing cause and effect at this stage and are given to “magical thinking”. IMAGINATION,
dream and vision imagery is essential for creating meaning at this stage. We see our own perspective as the only one that exists and assume everyone else sees things in exactly the same way that we do. We tend to act on our implicit beliefs without being aware of them. We may tend to speak or act without thinking, sometimes from internal wisdom, sometimes from ignorance. This might manifest as saying the “right thing” without even knowing where the words have come from, or it may result in “putting your foot in your mouth”.

Have you assumed that your own perspective is the same as everyone else's, or do you feel that there is only one correct opinion? Do you need to use your intuition, creative vision and dream imagery to find new meanings, or are you dwelling in your own personal dream-world, ignoring cause and effect, assuming that what seems right to you will be accepted by others?

**Gall Bladder Meridian Function 11 PM to 1 AM**

The gall bladder is a small organ that stores and concentrates the bile from the liver, which aids in digestion, particularly of fats. It contracts and releases bile when fats reach the duodenum from the stomach. On a cellular level this same function of maintaining fat metabolism relates to the subtle energy of the Gall Bladder Meridian.

Metaphor: How are you not digesting the heavy parts of your life functioning? Are you not diluting your life enough with clear water that is bringing in the neutral parts to reduce the concentration of dissolving or breaking aspects of your life? Do you remain too concentrated for your own good?

**Muscles Associated with the Gall Bladder Meridian:**

**Muscle: ANTERIOR DELTOID**—
This muscle, along with the coracobrachialis, is used in flexing the shoulder with the elbow bent, as in combing the hair. It is particularly associated with the Gall Bladder Meridian Function of concentrating/releasing bile to aid in digestion of heavy, dense substances such as fats. Inhibition in this muscle is sometimes associated with headaches related to toxicity from dietary indiscretions or eating fatty foods.

Feel this muscle on the front of the shoulder nearest the body and from the collar bone when the hand is lifted about twenty degrees from the thigh with the palm down.

Following the metaphor of combing the hair or grooming, do you pay too much or too little attention to the details of grooming, or taking care of yourself? Are you able to “take care” of your head, or do you do things that result in headache, figuratively or literally? Do you feel that you have too much concentrated bile, or are the heavy aspects of your life overwhelming you? Do you need to dilute or limit the amount of heavy, hard to digest things in your life?

**Muscle: POPLITEUS**—
This muscle turns the foot and knee in and flexes the leg. When it is not working properly it may increase susceptibility to knee injury, and is sometimes associated with neck pains. In all knee problems this muscle should be carefully evaluated, especially with repeated testing which may indicate a need for prolonged Neuro-lymphatic reflex massage. It is particularly associated with the Gall Bladder Meridian Function of concentrating/releasing bile to aid in digestion of heavy, dense substances such as fats. Inhibition in this muscle is sometimes associated with headaches related to toxicity from dietary indiscretions or eating fatty foods.

Feel this small muscle behind the knee when sitting with the leg hanging freely and the foot turned inward and parallel to the ground.

What little things are interfering with your movements figuratively and/or literally? Are seemingly small and/or unrelated things resulting in a pin in your neck, literally or figuratively? Do you feel that you have too much concentrated bile, or are the heavy aspects of your life overwhelming you? Do you need to dilute or limit the amount of heavy, hard to digest things in your life?

**Liver Meridian Function 1 to 3 AM**

The liver has more known functions than any other organ. Each cell has more programmed instructions than the most sophisticated computer program, and the Liver Meridian may activate a large number of the absorption and detoxification instructions. The liver is the largest physical organ and is most active while you sleep. The liver is said to store blood while the body is at rest, and also to exert particular influence over the lower abdomen, and so is considered of central importance in women's menstrual cycle and sexuality. Liver Meridian Function is involved in digestion, metabolism, storage and distribution of nourishment, filtration, detoxification, and immune function.
How are you handling your multiple responsibilities? Are you open to too many things and becoming overwhelmed/toxic, or do you need to absorb more, literally or figuratively? What needs detoxification in your life, what do you need to let go of? What do you need to bring into your life that will be cleansing, purifying or nourishing?

Muscles Associated with the Liver Meridian

**Muscle: PECTORALIS MAJOR STERNAL-**
This muscle is responsible for moving the arm in, turning and drawing it forward. The test motion suggests opening up, letting go, or throwing your hands up in surrender, and it is associated with the over 500 primarily absorption and detoxifying functions of the liver.

Feel this muscle of the chest contract between the breastbone and the top of the arm when the extended arm is brought down towards the center of the body with the thumb pointed to the ground.

Are you open to too many things and becoming overwhelmed/toxic, or do you need to absorb more, literally or figuratively? What needs detoxification in your life, what do you need to let go of? What do you need to bring into your life that will be cleansing, purifying or nourishing?

**Muscle: RHOMBOIDS-**
These muscles in the back of the shoulders pull in and turn the shoulder blade. They are used with the levator scapulae and are rarely found weak. They are also associated with the over 500 primarily absorption and detoxifying functions of the liver.

Feel these muscles contract between the shoulder blades and the spine when you bring your shoulder blades together toward the spine and your shoulders up toward the ears.

What are you uptight about? Are you holding onto toxic emotions, or retaining any other toxic material? Do you need to take a defensive posture?

The Fire Element

Heart, Small Intestine, Circulation-Sex And Triple Warmer Meridians

The Fire Element can be represented by the image of the hot, red sun, giving both light and warmth. It is associated with all of life's heat and passions, particularly with enthusiasm, vitality and "warm feelings". The Wood element provides the fuel for Fire and the Earth Element is formed from the ashes generated by Fire. Fire controls the Metal Element by melting it, purifying it, or forging it and giving it shape and strength. Water controls Fire by tempering or quenching it.

When you think of Fire, what image comes to mind and what might this symbolize in your life? Do you have enough "fire in the belly", passion and energy for life? Are you too passionate, burning up your energy stores, burning those around you, or are you too cold, and unable to be passionate?

The Color metaphor associated with the Fire Element is Red. This is the red of fire, of burning passions, of fuels converted into energy.

What does the color Red mean to you in your life, related to your current life goals? Do you have enough Red in your life, or too much Red?

The Season metaphor of the Fire Element is Summer. Summer is the warmest season and is the time of the most daylight. It is expected to be the period of finest development or maturing of powers. It can relate to the time for vacations and having fun or the early harvesting of the fast maturing crops. Perhaps greater activity is resulting in more vitality, fitness, muscle strength and tone.

What does the Summer mean in your life? What could Summer symbolize in relation to your goal? Are you able to have "fun in the sun", enjoying the warmth and activity of Summer, or are you sensitive to light, sapped of energy? Could you be exerting too much energy, getting burned by the light and heat of sun?

The Climate metaphor for the Fire Element is Heat. Imagine a place or a time when the dominant climate is heat. We can think of the heat of the Summer, or heat may relate to great passions, high pressure, or danger. When it's very hot, we need to balance the heat by drinking plenty of water, and so we must balance the Fire Element with the Water Element.

What might Heat symbolize in your life? Can you withstand the Heat in your job, family life, community etc, or is the stress and pressure overwhelming? Do you adapt to pressure and crises with adequate counterbalancing measures? Are you too passionate, playing it too cool, or getting burned out?

The Odor associated with the Fire Element is Scorched. The Scorched smell can be associated with a superficial burn or shriveling. This might mean a literal scorching by the hot sun, or any harsh weather, or a metaphorical "trial by fire", taking
risks and surviving dangerous situations with minimal consequences. Scorched might also relate to severe criticism, scorn, or stigma.

What does a Scorched smell suggest to you? Have you been literally scorched by fire or the elements, or scorched by traumatic experiences, or the passions, demands, or criticisms of others? Do you need to take some risky actions, even at the cost of getting a little scorched?

The Taste associated with the Fire Element is Bitter. Bitter is the taste of many poisons and may indicate danger. Many natural stimulants have a Bitter flavor. We use bitter as a metaphor for lingering regrets or a sense of injustice or unpleasantness.

What does a Bitter taste make you think of? Do you have a lingering regret or grudge that you're Bitter about? What's poisoning you, or adding a bitter element to your pleasures? Are you over-stimulated, on edge, hooked on adrenaline, ready to fight or flee at any moment, or do you need some stimulation in your life to get the juices flowing?

The Emotion associated with the Fire Element is Joy. Joy may be a keen and lively pleasure, getting a kick out of life, or satisfaction with your life and having a sense of peace and well being. The Fire element is also associated with all of the passionate emotions, particularly Love. It's important to be aware when we are lacking happiness, feeling spiritless, gloomy, or downhearted. There are four meridians associated with the Fire element but only two associated with the other meridians. Although it's important to allow ourselves to experience all of the emotions, we need to have at least twice as much Love and Joy as the other emotions. However, when we are manic or jovial when it's not appropriate, oblivious to circumstances that require a shift in attitude other than "happy-go-lucky", it can be a problem.

What place does Joy have in your life and how does Joy relate to your goals? Do you need more Love and Joy in your life, or are you masking pain with a manic attitude that is out of touch with reality? Are you dependent on drugs to stimulate you and allow you to enjoy yourself, or can you find contentment within yourself?

The Sound associated with the Fire Element is Laughing. This sound is made by rhythmically exhaling in a spirit of mirth, joy, or pleasure. Laughter can also be associated with triumph, ridicule, or defiance etc. Laughter can be one of the most healing forms of expression, but we may need to unlearn negative associations with laughter, such as "laughing is for fools" or traumatic experiences where we have been the object of derisive laughter. Laughter may also come at strange moments, when we are nervous, frightened, grieving or in despair. Paying attention to the spirit behind the laughter can be very important for our healing.

What role does Laughing have in your life or in relation to your goal? Do you need to have more mirth and Laughing in your life, or do you avoid experiencing other emotions by "laughing them off"? Is there something that you need to allow yourself to laugh about, or have you laughed at an inappropriate moment? Have you been made fun of, laughed at, scorned or ridiculed?

The Earth Element is said to Fortify the Arteries. The Arteries circulate our lifeblood, bringing nourishment and fuel. This might literally relate to circulation, immune system function, and the maintenance of body temperature. It can relate figuratively to our supply lines of essential materials, fuel for heat and cooking, food supplies and anything that sustains our body.

What do Arteries or Supply Lines symbolize in relation to your goals? Do you have a steady flow of the fuels and supplies that you need to maintain your mental, emotional, spiritual and physical vitality? Are you able to distribute your resources to sustain all of the areas of your life, or do some parts of your life get poor circulation and go cold?

The Personal Power metaphor of the Fire Element is Mature. To mature is to reach your full growth, to come of age, to be able to use discretion. Maturity is characterized by a full appreciation and use of our capacities and an understanding of our limitations. To be fully mature is to be able to act responsibly without always worrying about whether our behavior seems "grown up". If we are precocious, we may have the appearance of being mature without the capacity to be responsible, or we may have knowledge and experience that is beyond our maturity.

What does Mature symbolize in your life, or in relation to your goals? Are you at ease with your limitations and able to make full use of your capacities? Are you being overly capricious or are you always acting "like and adult", and never experiencing the childhood wonder and joy in life?

In the Faith/Worldview metaphor of the Fire Element is related to Childhood or “School Years”. This phase is characterized by the Mechanistic, Circular Causality model where linear thinking sees all effects as directly related to causes that precede them. This is the belief that, "If you just look carefully enough, you will find the single cause for any given effect." One will find the specific germ, virus or gene that is causing the specific effect (disease as a discrete entity that can be killed). It is a warrior model where there are good guys and bad guys and fighting is the best way to reach your goal. It is referred to as the Literal/Mythic stage. In this stage we are given to literal interpretation of moral rules and attitudes and favor a singularity of meaning, in which fact is distinguished from and valued over fantasy. There is a focus on Reciprocity and a tendency to Perfectionism.

What does Literal or Mythic Faith suggest to you? Are you hemmed in by a narrow, literal interpretation of rules, morals or beliefs or could you benefit from being conscious of conventions and not always having to re-invent the wheel or go it alone? Do you expect precise reciprocity in your dealings with others?
Heart Meridian Function 11 AM-1 PM

The Heart Function involves the cycling of the blood as well as electrical communication with the rest of the cells of the whole Soul. The heart is in constant communication with all of the organs and muscles to determine their blood/oxygen needs from moment to moment. The heart generates 5000 times more powerful electrical messages throughout the Soul than the brain. In the Chinese belief system, the heart is also strongly associated with mental processes, while in the West we have the traditional metaphor of the heart as an emotional center and a center of wisdom. In Chinese medicine, the heart is called the “sovereign ruler” which directs action with clear insight.

How is your circulation and communication within your Soul, or in your daily activities, literally or figuratively? What do you feel in your heart as opposed to your head? Is there any conflict between your logical thinking, intuition, wisdom or emotional feelings? How are you functioning in relation to receiving and sending messages about your life to yourself and others?

Muscles Associated with the Heart Meridian

SUBSCAPULARIS-
This muscle functions to hold the shoulder blade in place. It is hidden behind the shoulder blade, and so cannot be observed or felt by another person, accept by secondary inference. This muscle is particularly associated with Heart Meridian Function, which involves the circulation of the blood and electrical communication throughout the whole Soul, as well as the traditional metaphor of the heart as an emotional center.

Feel this muscle contracting under the shoulder blade when the arm is held at ninety degrees from the side of the body and the forearm is held to form a right angle and pulled posterior to feel the contraction of the muscle. It can also be felt by placing the back of the hand at the small of the back and pressing it against the body and feeling the contraction under the shoulder blade.

What are you hiding or keeping private? Is there something that you need to reveal? What do you feel in your heart as opposed to your head? How are you in receiving and sending messages about your life to yourself and others? How is your communication and circulation within your Soul, or in your daily activities, literally or figuratively?

Small Intestine Meridian Function 1-3 PM

The Small Intestine Function is primarily absorption of nutritious substances and the separation of waste material. These same functions take place on the cellular level, and in the Soul as a whole. It is the assimilation of influences and stuff from outside the Soul. The small intestine winds for over 23 feet and has three main parts, the duodenum, the jejunum, and the ileum. Throughout the small intestine, various secretions from other organs are added to the liquefied foods, which aid in the absorption nutrients. Bacteria make up a large amount of the contents of the small intestine, also acting upon the materials that enter so that they can be absorbed.

Are you having trouble digesting or absorbing things in your life that are meant to be nourishing, literally or figuratively? What is difficult for you to absorb or gives you a stomachache (physical, emotional, etc) or inhibits free breathing, figuratively or literally?

Muscles Associated with the Small Intestine Meridian

Muscle: QUADRICEPS-
This muscle straightens the knee and flexes the thigh. Weakness will be evident when there is difficulty climbing stairs or getting up from a seated position. Pain in the knee is often associated with weakness in this muscle. This muscle is also associated with the function of the jejunum and ileum, which are the last 2/3 of the small intestine, and weakness in this muscle may correspond with digestive problems.

Feel this muscle in the front of your thigh when you bend your thigh at the hip as you would in taking a step up and keeping your foot in front, ahead of your knee.

What do you need to step up to or are you taking steps that are too large? What in your life is like climbing stairs or climbing a mountain? Are you having trouble digesting or absorbing things in your life that are meant to be nourishing, literally or figuratively?

Muscle: ABDOMINALS-
These muscles are associated with posture and are very important in maintaining a balanced spine. When these muscles are out of balance, many pains in the back and neck can be present. They are always used together and are thin layers that allow for twisting and bending and maintaining the abdominal contents in the best positions for full functioning. These muscles need exercise. One of the best exercises for them is walking with a long stride. Recovery from the postural changes during
pregnancy will be enhanced by strengthening these muscles and maintaining an exercise routine of at least 20 minutes daily which involve using these muscles. These muscles are also associated with the duodenum, the first third of the small intestine. They are commonly weak in connection with "stomach aches", digestion problems, and breathing difficulty.

Feel these muscles between your lowest ribs, breastbone and the pubic bone while seated with your feet as close to the buttocks as comfortable and leaning back with the chin level. The oblique and transverse can be felt best when twisting from this position to the left and right.

What are you doing that is not allowing you to maintain the posture that is most suitable for you literally or figuratively? How is your attitude toward life in general, balanced or unbalanced? Do you feel that you are fulfilling your daily walk of life? What is difficult for you to absorb, gives you a stomachache (physical, emotional, etc) or inhibits free breathing, figuratively or literally?

Circulation-Sex Meridian Function 7-9 PM

The many functions of the Circulation/Sex Meridian are intimately associated with the hormones and chemical messengers related to all reproduction whether it be appropriate balance in cell production or sexual procreation. It has to do with the nourishment of new cells and the preparation for cell reproduction. It involves the menstruation cycles, ovarian and uterine functions and prostate and testicular functions. This includes the pleasures of sexual love. It also has to do with passing on genetic, cultural, and personal heritage. The Circulation/Sex Meridian is sometimes also called the Pericardium Meridian and relates to the muscular function of the heart and blood vessels, that which keeps the beat steady and appropriate for the external and internal environments.

Do you feel balanced regarding reproduction and sex? What are you doing to see that your legacy will be passed on in your family, work, play, spiritual community? Do you feel that you have sufficient circulation of blood, warmth, nutrition or sexual energy?

Muscles Associated with the Circulation Sex Meridian:

Muscle: GLUTEUS MEDIUS-
The Gluteus Medius is used to pull the thigh out and rotate the leg. If this muscle is weak, there may be a corresponding high shoulder or hip. There may be a tendency to limp, or the legs may bow out. The test motion involves holding the legs apart.

Feel this muscle at the side and back of the pelvis, it contracts when you lift your foot off the floor to prevent tripping over little things and when you raise your leg to the side.

What little things are you tripping over or bumping into? Do you have any difficulty holding your legs open, literally or figuratively?

Muscle: ADDUCTORS-
The adductors hold the thigh in, flexing it and rotating it inward. Weakness can make the pelvis tilt down. These muscles are essential to horseback riders. Strain from remaining in the saddles can result in weakness in the adductors and the bow legged posture characteristic of cowboys. The muscle test involves holding the legs together.

Feel these inner thigh muscles contracting when you hold your knees and ankles together to pull your inner thigh close together.

What personally private matters are you protecting? Do you need to share some of these issues, or do you need to keep more things private? Do you have any difficulty holding your legs together, figuratively or literally? Do you feel that you have protected yourself or others enough regarding sexual matters? If you think of your life or current goal as a horse to ride, are you comfortable in the saddle, or saddle sore?

Muscle: PIRIFORMIS-
This hip muscle is very important in posture, especially in the position of the sacrum. Weakness on one side can allow the sacrum to twist, resulting in a "knock knee" posture. The Piriformis is located right next to the sciatic nerve which is the longest, largest nerve in the body. Sometimes imbalances in this muscles is associated with pain in the low back and down the back of the thigh and leg.

Feel this muscle deep inside the pelvis when you have the knee bend at ninety degrees and turned inward.

Do you feel knock kneed, or clumsy, literally or figuratively? Is there some small, subtle, or deep issue irritating on your nerves or causing you pain, literally or figuratively?

Muscle: GLUTEUS MAXIMUS-
This is considered the strongest muscle and when it is imbalanced, it can have far reaching effects because of the loss of stability in the pelvis. It is frequently associated with misalignment in the neck and an imbalanced position of the head. The motion of the test suggests kicking behind you.

Feel this muscle contract and give shape to your buttocks when moving the thigh posterior to the body, especially with the knee bent at ninety degrees, to eliminate most of the hamstrings action.

Are you adequately utilizing your gross power to maintain overall stability? Are you relying too much on raw strength, when subtleties are called for? Are your sexual urges giving you a pain in the neck OR is your "head" (thinking) interfering with your fulfillment of your physical/survival/procreative needs?

**Triple Warmer Meridian Function 9-11 PM**

The Triple Warmer is a somewhat mysterious Meridian in that it is said to have Organ Function in the Chinese energy system, yet it is not associated with a specific organ. It is said to have function, but no form, or it is alternatively defined as having its functions through the interactions of three different groups of organs found in the thoracic, upper and lower abdominal areas. The functions of the Triple Warmer take the form of three "heats", the heat of metabolism and maintaining body heat, the heat of the "fight or flight" heat of life passions.

**Triple Warmer Function** is associated with various interactions of gland secretions involved in our various human passions. The adrenal glands function in concert with other hormonal glands, particularly in fighting or running away in a moment of crisis, or recovery from injury, illness, malfunction and generalized stress. Four of the muscles that are related to this meridian function are muscles involved in running, pushing off, or getting on your toes, all essential fight or flight/passion muscles. The pituitary gland works in concert with other endocrine glands that have functions related the heat of life passions, procreative activity and sexual pleasure, life and death circumstances, causes worth suffering and dying for, etc.

What gets you hot, physically, mentally, spiritually or emotionally? What are you running from? What are you fighting? Do you feel that your life is one of constant fight or flight? Are you always on the run? What are you willing to suffer or even to die for? Do you feel that you have the fire, the passion, to reach your goals?

**Muscles Associated with the Triple Warmer Meridian**

**Muscle: TERES MINOR**
This shoulder muscle rotates the arm and forearm and can be involved in wrist and elbow problems. With weakness on one side, the hands will be turned differently when the arms are allowed to hang down to the side. The action of the muscle test suggests opening the arms or gathering things in. This muscle is associated with the 3 "heats" of the triple warmer meridian, particularly the heat of metabolism associated with Thyroid function. The thyroid function involves the balance of metabolism in breaking down or regenerating tissues as well as maintaining body temperature and fat content.

Feel this small muscle between the lower tip of the shoulder blade and the back of the humerus head/top of the arm, when the forearm is bent about 100 degrees at the elbow and the hand is open facing away from the body and rotated externally.

**Muscle: SARTORIUS**
This is the longest muscle in the body. It serves to flex the leg and thigh and turn the thigh sideways and to flex the pelvis and/or twist the hips. It has been referred to as the "tailor's muscle" as it brings one leg over the opposite knee to create a lap for working on a piece of clothing. This muscle is associated with the 3 "heats" of the Triple Warmer Meridian, particularly the hormonal heats of "fight or flight" or sexual passion of the pituitary gland.

The pituitary gland works in concert with other endocrine glands that have functions related the heat of life passions, procreative needs, life and death circumstances, causes worth suffering and dying for, etc.

Feel this long muscle from the outermost edge of the top of the hip bones across the thigh to the inner portion of the shin bone just below the knee when you are crossing your foot to the opposite knee and lowering the same knee as far as possible.

**Muscle: GRACILIS**
Do you feel like you have the strength or the passion to meet the challenges in your work/life, to create or to procreate? Do you feel like you have strength or passion to "go the distance", or to give your all, literally or figuratively? What gets you hot, physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually, etc.?
This muscle of the inner thigh works in conjunction with the sartorius and hamstrings in bending the knee. Weakness in this muscle makes it difficult to bend the knee without also flexing the hip, and can contribute to a "knock kneed" posture. This muscle is associated with the 3 "heats" of the Triple Warmer Meridian, particularly the heat of passion in all aspects of living associated with the pituitary gland. The pituitary gland works in concert with other endocrine glands that have functions related to the heat of life passions, procreative needs, life and death circumstances, causes worth suffering and dying for, etc.

**Feel this inner muscle contracting from the pubic bone down the inside of the thigh to just below the knee, when you put your foot over the top of the opposite foot and bring your thighs together.**

**Do you feel clumsy when you are passionate about different aspects of your life? Are you shy about displaying your passions, or do your erupting passions get out of your control? What gets you hot, physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually, etc.?**

**Muscle: SOLEUS-**

This muscle works synergistically with the Gastrocnemius and the Plantaris, having in common the Achilles tendon and a common attachment above the knee of all three of these muscle in the Triceps Surae-the three parts of the calf- to flex the foot and the calf, steadying the foot. Weakness in this muscle may cause a tendency to lean or fall forward. This muscle is associated with the 3 "heats" of the Triple Warmer Meridian, particularly the adrenal hormonal heat related to the mechanism of fight or flight. The adrenal glands function in concert with other hormonal glands, particularly in fighting or running away in a moment of crisis, recovery from injury, illness, malfunction and generalized stress.

**Feel this deep calf muscle contract when you are pushing with your toes in a plantar flexion position- (pointing your toes away from you), with your knee bent at approximately ninety degrees.**

**Do you have difficulty determining when to stand your ground and fight or when to retreat? Do you find that you are overly aggressive, or fearful, in non-crisis situations, or do you fail to "rise to the occasion" when there is a genuine crisis? Do you feel that your life is one never-ending crisis, or an endless series of crises?**

**Muscle: GASTROCNEMIUS-**

This muscle works synergistically with the Soleus and the Plantaris, having in common the Achilles tendon and a common attachment above the knee of all three of these muscle in the Triceps Surae-the three parts of the calf- to flex the foot and the calf, steadying the foot. Weakness can cause hyperextension of the knee, inability to rise up on the toes, or difficulty in bending the knees. This muscle is associated with the 3 "heats" of the Triple Warmer Meridian, particularly the adrenal hormonal heat related to the mechanism of fight or flight. The adrenal glands function in concert with other hormonal glands, particularly in fighting or running away in a moment of crisis, recovery from injury, illness, malfunction and generalized stress.

**Feel this superficial calf muscle starting behind the knee and ending at the common tendon of the heel, when the toes are pointed away from the knee, while the knee is slightly bent. A stronger contraction can be felt if the toes are pushing against the ground or an object.**

**What are you running to or from? Do you have difficulty determining when to stand your ground and fight or when to retreat? Do you find that you are overly aggressive, or fearful, in non-crisis situations, or do you fail to "rise to the occasion" when there is a genuine crisis? Do you feel that your life is one never-ending crisis, or an endless series of crises?**

### A Protocol for Fix-As-You-Go Balancing

*Using Metaphors as a Primary Intervention*

1. Establish a goal that you feel enthusiastic about and you believe is possible.
2. Do any pretests that you normally do
3. Check and correct the Central and Governing meridians, using the usual reflexes
   (i.e. Spinal Reflex if bilateral weakness is found, then NL, NV, Meridians, etc.
   or use circuit location if you prefer)
   AND—- as you use the touch reflex, refer to the metaphors for the Central and Governing meridians.
   **Example**, Central: "What subtle, small thing do you need to let go of?"
   **Example**, Governing: "What burden do you need to release?"
4. Check and correct the rest of the meridians using the following guidelines for using metaphors :
   4a. Before using any touch reflexes, offer the word or concept of each metaphor and see what idea or meaning it suggests to the person being balanced in the context of his or her life/goals.
   4b. Present the metaphors as only possibly meaningful. Clarify your own understanding of the traditional meaning of the metaphor, or of your interpretation in this context only to "prime the pump" and get ideas flowing, rather than dictate meaning.
   4c. It may be fruitful to talk over all of the metaphors if it feels appropriate for both people, but it isn't necessary to talk about all of them. Sometimes just one metaphor "rings the bell".
   4d. Recheck the muscle to confirm that it is now strong. If the muscle has remained inhibited, see if contemplating the other metaphors rings a bell for the person. Finally if you've exhausted the metaphors and the muscle is still weak, continue with the touch reflexes. Do this with each of the muscles representing the meridians until no further imbalances are indicated by muscle tests.
5. Reassess your goal and how you are feeling, noting whether any of the metaphors will be valuable for you to hold in mind to enhance your ongoing awareness, dynamism, and balance.

A Protocol for **Assessment Balancing**

**Using Metaphors as a Primary Intervention**

1. Establish a goal that you feel enthusiastic about and you believe is possible.
2. Do any pretests that you normally do
3. Check and correct the Central and Governing meridians, using the usual reflexes
   (i.e. Spinal Reflex if bilateral weakness is found, then NL, NV, Meridians, etc.
   or use circuit location if you prefer)
   AND--- as you use the touch reflex, refer to the metaphors for the Central and Governing meridians.
   
   Example, Central: "What subtle, small thing do you need to let go of?"
   Example, Governing: "What burden do you need to release?"
4. Check the rest of the indicators for the remaining meridians, recording results on the 5 element diagram, or the Midday Midnite/24Hour "Wheel".
   (4b. If you are going to check for over-energy, use the Alarm Points to establish over-energy pattern.)
5. Assess the best place to begin balancing according to the 5-element or "wheel" rules. (see TFH manual pages 112-115)
6. Once you've chosen the appropriate meridian to start with, refer to the metaphors associated with muscle/meridian/element, **following these guidelines:**
   6a. Offer the word or Concept of each metaphor and see what idea or meaning it suggests to the person being balanced in the context of his or her life/goals.
   6b. Present the metaphors as only *possibly* meaningful. Clarify your own understanding of the traditional meaning of the metaphor, or of your interpretation in this context only to "prime the pump" and get ideas flowing, rather than dictate meaning.
   6c. It may be fruitful to talk over all of the metaphors if it feels appropriate for both people, but it isn't necessary to talk about all of them. Sometimes just one metaphor "rings the bell".
   6d. Recheck the muscle to confirm that it is now strong. If the muscle has remained inhibited, see if contemplating the other metaphors rings a bell for the person. Finally if you've exhausted the metaphors and the muscle is still weak, continue with the touch reflexes.
7. After correction, recheck all (under-energy) muscles to confirm that they are now facilitated. Correct any which may have remained inhibited, repeating steps 6a-6d.
   (7b. If you have checked over-energy, recheck ALL alarm points– all should now be clear.
   Use the acupressure holding points for sedation of any over-energy which may have remained.)
8. Reassess your goal and how you are feeling, noting whether any of the metaphors will be valuable for you to hold in mind to enhance ongoing awareness, dynamism, and balance.