


The Yin and Yang at work

 How to manage the 'push' and 'pull'

BY JILL CRESSY

How do we energize the workplace? We stop fighting stress and instead work with it so we can work through it. The best way to work with stress is to manage your duality. We all have the energy of 'push' and 'pull' continuously competing and negotiating each day. Whether we are male or female, employer or employee, we each have feminine and masculine qualities playing out in our working day. In yoga, we call this Yin and Yang. Yin is our feminine 'pull' energy. Yang is our masculine 'push' energy. We don't need 50 percent Yin and 50 percent Yang throughout the working day. What we need is constant movement, the ability to shift between our 'push' and 'pull' energy as needs and desires change. In this way, we achieve 'energetic play' – a fusion of feminine and masculine impulse.

Our feminine energy is the ability to be flexible, to go with the flow, to surrender to the moment, to be open and receptive to different viewpoints, and to embrace situations as they arise, to let situations unfold without attempting to control the outcome. This is our Yin essence. It brings us into the now, allowing us to connect more intimately with the moment and align with the 'be' rather than the 'do'. For example, when we feel anger, we can embrace this emotion by allowing ourselves to feel the anger fully, knowing it's ok to be with this emotion, trusting that the anger is here for a purpose. The anger can be perceived as a friend, a cooperative energy. It shows us that whatever we're responding to has meaning, and we don't necessarily have to figure out or feel out the message, we just need to be present with the anger even if it's just for a few seconds.

The Yin essence is to trust the experience, realizing that it's necessary to be vulnerable at times for submissiveness is part of our make-up and it's here to provide support. By giving ourselves permission to feel anger throughout the entire body, we let the anger move through our system. If we deny the anger and shift it before feeling it fully, then it just gets filed and shows up later as tension or illness, challenging our immune system.

Other circumstances in our day require Yang instinct, our masculine energy. We can't be in the present so much that we fail to think about the future. We need to stay grounded in the practical world and be able to function in a setting that has rules and policies. It is useful to rely on our Yang instinct to create specific goals, give

direction, take initiative, and set boundaries with intent. We need to be able to write outlines, fill our forms, plan budgets, and pay the bills. These tasks require a more aggressive 'push' energy, our masculine instinct to control. Male or female, we all need a certain degree of push in our life.

The art and skill is to consciously change the Yin/Yang ration. For example, the choice to speak up or shut up is a frequent workplace challenge. We need to realize when it's appropriate to share our truth and when it's appropriate to be patient and listen. When





“When we learn the dance of ‘pull’ and ‘push’ and consciously shift our Yin and Yang, we naturally feel more vital. It’s when our Yin and Yang are out of whack that we feel on edge, off, out of sorts, confused, and frustrated.”

we learn the dance of ‘pull’ and ‘push’ and consciously shift our Yin and Yang, we naturally feel more vital. It’s when our Yin and Yang are out of whack that we feel on edge, off, out of sorts, confused, and frustrated.

The field of energy medicine taught us the importance of intuition. We learned about our gut instincts, hunches, and the importance of intuitive data that we download through signs, signals, conversations, dreams, and feelings. Many of us became skilled as natural intuitive readers. We can tap into our inner knowing and see

through the drama. We are able to observe rather than absorb all the toxic venting that goes down each day. We realize our co-worker’s blocks, defenses, and old tapes.

We see the links and patterns in the situations that they personally attract, and the links and patterns in the situations that our organization attracts. And in cases where we know our co-workers well enough to understand their personal past, we see the family patterns that they are re-creating in the workplace. But is it our place to let them know what we are picking up? While it’s important for us to understand the core truth of the situation at hand, we don’t always need to share our insight. We can perceive the bigger picture of the immediate so-called problem and make conscious choices as to what we do with this information. We are not necessarily the messenger of all the messages that we receive, particularly if the person we are reading is not open to our message.

It’s useful to be aware of our inner voice, yet equally important to realize when it’s more appropriate to keep our intuitive hits silent. We have the power to make conscious choices and hold back what we want to say. If we are bluntly honest and speak our intuitive insights moment to moment, calling everyone on their stuff, then we risk losing respect from those we work with and risk hurting people’s feelings. We’re here to do a job and work together in harmony.

Practice shifting between your ‘push’ and ‘pull’ energy in the workplace. If you find yourself relying on your Yang energy too often, interrupting colleagues and being overly blunt, practice holding back; instead of saying what’s on your mind, take a deep breath and stay silent! To reinforce your Yin energy, consider participating in dance classes, yoga, meditation, or other activities that teach you to surrender to the moment. If you find yourself holding back too often and not being assertive enough, practice jumping into conversations and taking charge of situations. To reinforce your Yang energy, consider strength training or other activities that provide an aggressive outlet.

By learning to manage our Yin and Yang energies, we master the dance of ‘push’ and ‘pull’ and begin to enjoy the process of workplace transformation. By creating more peace and harmony inside ourselves, we help those around us do the same. Join the cause to manage the ‘push’ and ‘pull’ in your workplace and together, we can co-create healthier working teams! □

Jill Cressy (BPHE, Can-Fit-Pro FIS, Black Belt Nia Instructor)
Assistant Program Manager: Fitness & Instruction
Faculty of Physical Education & Health, University of Toronto