

The Five Wisdom Energies

Adapted from *Natural Brilliance*, Chapter 1: Five Wisdom Qualities

Irini Rockwell

for Omega 9/18/2012

<http://www.eomega.org/article/the-five-wisdom-energies>

The five wisdoms reveal the subtle energetic dimension of your experience—body, emotions, mental activity, and sense perceptions. Take Irini Rockwell's five wisdoms questionnaire to discover more about yourself and find clues to striking greater balance in your life.

The five wisdom energies are about us, personally and interpersonally—what we think, feel, say, and do. They describe different styles of perceiving and interacting with our world. These teachings give us a map of our inner world of thoughts and emotions as well as an approach to understanding our ways of behaving and relating to others. In short, the five wisdoms offer a model of human dynamics. Each energy style expresses itself in the form of certain personality traits, some of which we might call dysfunctional or neurotic, and some of which we may consider constructive or wise. Both troublesome emotions and pleasant ones arise out of a common energetic matrix.

The five wisdoms reveal the subtle energetic dimension of the basic elements of our experience—body, emotions, mental activity, and sense perceptions. The five wisdoms also manifest in aspects of the physical world—landscape, architecture, and interior design. When we gain more awareness, we begin to align with our inner wisdom and the wisdom around us. Ultimately, the five wisdoms are teachings about bringing out the best of who we are and seeing the world with new eyes.

Let's briefly look at the central characteristics of the five wisdom energies, both how we might get stuck in them and how they can make us shine.

The Five Wisdoms

Spaciousness (Buddha)

At its best: Open and peaceful. Residing in the present moment. The state we might experience during meditation practice or sitting contentedly under a tree. A sense that everything is okay.

At its worst: Not caring about anything; ignoring and denying reality; wanting to be left alone. Apathy and inertia. Oblivion.

Clarity (Vajra)

At its best: Perceptive, highly intelligent, and able to see things as they are. Mental clarity that demands nothing of others.

At its worst: Opinionated, self-righteous, and controlling. Convinced of being right and knowing how things should be. Imposing one's opinions on others.

Richness (Ratna)

At its best: Resourceful, satisfied, and generous. The feeling that comes from enjoying a meal in the company of friends and family. Deeply satisfied and utterly fulfilled.

At its worst: Low self-esteem, greed, puffed-up pride, and feeling overwhelmed.

Passion (Padma)

At its best: Empathic, compassionate, caring, and warm. Intuitive and emotional. Thrives in relationship.

At its worst: Obsessively wanting to possess someone or something—a significant other, a job, a dress, or simply life at its best. Grasping and clingy.

Activity (Karma)

At its best: Effective, productive, and swift; acting for the benefit of others.

At its worst: Power-hungry, manipulative, competitive, and envious; living in overdrive.

Expressing the Full Range of Our Energetic Qualities

Our personality or disposition, our habits and tendencies, all make us an open book. It is not hard to sense different qualities in people—a demanding child, a seductive lover, a sharp tongued boss. Each person and situation has a perceivable energy. A person has a “presence.” A place has “atmosphere.” An event might be characterized as “intense,” or a person as “mellow.”

For example, Molly is sluggish, Pete is antsy, and Francois is self-absorbed. The day is muggy, last night there was a thunderstorm, and now we are going into a lively air-conditioned restaurant. Donna and Steve are struggling in their relationship and the energy is frozen between them. Jazmine and Justin are in love and they can't stop touching each other. The ambient tone of places could be soft rolling hills or jagged peaks, winter or summer, or a cozy living room or a busy airport. We could find ourselves in a variety of situations—a lively party, a deadly boring board meeting, or a tense courtroom.

Here is an example of two couples, one more energetically attuned than the other. Dorothy and Gerald's marriage is quite traditional. They live much as their parents and grandparents did—in a small house in a suburban neighborhood. He works a nine-to-five job while she stays home and takes care of the house and children. They both have a lot of buddha energy, keeping life simple and routine. They both work hard (karma). Their world is fairly shut down, uncomplicated, and survival-oriented. It is two-dimensional but content in a simple way. In contrast, Isabella and Jake live in the city where they both attended university. She studied psychology and he architecture. They share many things together, such as tango (padma) and backpacking (buddha/karma), and they recently began to meditate (buddha). They are personable (padma), active (karma), and, having similar views (vajra), engage in promoting an ecologically-friendly world. They have a good balance of the five wisdom energies. They are vibrant.

Where Are the Five Wisdom Energies?

- In our inner world of thoughts, emotions, breath, and sense perceptions
- In the ways we express our inner life through body posture, movement, facial expressions, mannerisms, word choices, tone and tempo of our voice, attitudes, decisions, and actions
- In the external world, manifesting as colors, landscapes, shapes, seasons, elements, and environments

There is a natural progression to acquainting ourselves with these energetic qualities. The more experiences we have where the five wisdom energies illuminate situations, the more authentic they seem. We see the particular style of our confusion or intelligence in the moment. We both know about them, and experience them. They come into our being and give us a new language for understanding and expressing our experience. Finally they become part of us and reflect in what we think, feel, say, and do.

Though we have the potential to embody all the energies and can display different energies in different areas of our lives, we come into this life with our unique propensities. We show one or two energies particularly clearly, though the others are always at play. Then we create a life around those (subconscious) choices and eventually become entrenched in that way of being. In so doing, we limit ourselves. Therefore, it takes a significant amount of awareness to begin to see our energetic mix and begin to embrace *all* that we are.

It's difficult to let go of the habitual patterns by which we have operated our whole life. In my own life, I have displayed a lot of padma energy and so I thought of myself as someone who would always be in a primary relationship. Relatively late in life, though, I became single. From a padma perspective, this was like a death sentence. Though it took some time, I came to understand that as a single person, I was able to become emotionally intimate with more people since I had time for more people. To my amazement, this growing sense of richness in relationships (ratna) was tremendously liberating and joyful.

What Do We Mean by Energy?

- Energy is the basic vitality of our existence, the vibrant aspect of being.
- It is experienced intuitively.
- As our natural power or strength, we can align with it or diminish it.
- Wisdom energy is a positive life force; confused energy sabotages it.
- We experience ourselves and primal phenomena as inseparable and interwoven.
- We are in an energetically reciprocal relationship with our world.

To understand the five wisdoms, we need to understand energy. There is an underlying premise that energy pervades our existence and is constantly in flux. The energetic dimension opens the door to a subtle level of being, which cannot be understood conceptually. Energy is not what is physical. It's not tangible, concrete, or solid like a table or chair that we can see and name. It is also not what we think. Some commonly used words that describe energy are *quality, ambiance, radiance, vibration, resonance, and tone*. Note that the last three are primarily used in music.

When we become attuned to energetic display in an unbiased way, without the filters of like, dislike, or disinterest, we experience the world directly. The wisdom qualities of spaciousness, relaxation, and warmth allow this to happen. We break down the barrier between ourselves and “other.” We dissolve duality. With *maitri* (a Sanskrit word meaning “loving-kindness”), we intermingle and resonate with life in and around us. Energy is not bound by form, so inner and outer are interdependent and interpenetrate. Just as sound has a vibration, resonance, and tone, so does energy. We experience ourselves and phenomena as inseparable and interwoven. The salient point is that the outer environment influences our inner experience, either clarifying or distorting it, and our state of mind colors our experience of the environment.

Understanding Our Psychophysical Barometer

- We are affected by the energy around us whether we are aware of it or not.
- With awareness, we can gauge the atmospheric condition in a given situation.
- Life is constantly challenging us to say yes or no, to open or close.
- When open and welcoming, we feel spacious and full of possibility.
- When closed and withdrawn, we feel stuck, dense, and claustrophobic.

What is your energy right now? What is the ambient tone of the room you are in? What do you know? What do you feel, intuit? Can you sense these as distinct and different experiences? Direct experience—being “tuned in”—is the only way to understand the energetic dimension of reality. We detect or sense energy with what I have termed our psychophysical barometer. We feel or intuit energy both mentally and physically. We can gauge the atmospheric condition, tone, or energetic feel of people, places, and situations through our senses and by using our intuition. We can learn to “read” energy.

Energetic resonance—the unfiltered direct experience of ourselves and our world—is a fundamental principle of the Tantric tradition of Tibetan Buddhism and is shared by many cultures. For instance, feng shui is the study of how powerful energy spots in landscapes and building structures can enhance overall energy. In many cultures there is reciprocity among spirituality, art, and everyday functioning. People in these cultures are more tuned in to the felt experience of reality.

We might feel that the energetic dimension of reality is not important enough to bother with, but energy affects us whether we are aware of it or not. Unconsciously, we sense things and react to them all the time. What are the consequences of not tuning in to energetic reality? We become a slave to it. As well, reality would have no vibrancy.

Tuning in to this more subtle level of our existence expands our experience exponentially. In particular, our willingness to stay with whatever arises—likable or disagreeable—opens us to a vivid encounter with life. Having accessed more depth, we become the best of who we are with a more authentic and enlivened relationship to everyone and everything. Though these ideas may initially seem foreign, we could still feel some attraction to them. Our curiosity is sparked

because these five energetic qualities begin to resonate with us.

Practical Uses of the Five Wisdom Energies

When we learn to identify and understand the distinctive energetic qualities, we discover new ways of working with everyday situations. We can get away from rejecting our neurosis (or someone else's) and instead use it. Soon we start to see un-evolved areas as dynamic growth areas—and that any situation is workable.

When we accommodate the parts of ourselves that we like the least and energies in others that feel threatening, we are allowing the full spectrum of human experience to display itself. One of the essential lessons of the five wisdom energies is that in embracing our confusion, we discover that our wisdom is right there. When we are familiar with the characteristics of each energy style, we immediately know where the sanity is and where the neurosis is. We can align ourselves with the sanity, with the wisdom aspect. At that point we have discovered the best within us, our unique brand of brilliance. We discover we have great liberty to be who we are, and we can celebrate that.

I'll share with you one of my favorite analogies. As a frequent flier, I never cease to be amazed that up there, above the clouds, the sun is always shining—24 hours a day. Too often we forget this, see only the clouds and become convinced that they are real. We make the clouds solid and identify with them. However, with an attitude of unconditional loving openness, we can begin to see the clouds as transparent and illusory. In fact, we can fly right through them, though the ride might get a little bumpy. When we identify with the sun, we are touching our intrinsic wisdom.

A Five Wisdoms Questionnaire

Use the following self-reflective questionnaire to reveal your characteristics and tendencies. Because you are a mix of energies, you can choose more than one answer

1. What is your style of dress?

Simple lines, solid colors, or geometric patterns

Rich, colorful, and lots of ornamentation

Flashy, colorful, and sexy

Plain, functional, and muted colors

Simple, muted colors

2. What kind of landscape or environment do you prefer?

High mountains or cities, and orderly interiors

Tropical jungles, dense forest, shopping malls, and richly decorated interiors

Gardens, flowering meadows, rolling hills, and warm, cozy interiors

Big, busy cities and functional interiors

Great plains, deserts, snowfields, and sparsely furnished interiors

3. At what time of day do you feel at your best?

Dawn

Late afternoon

Dusk, twilight

Morning

No one particular time

4. Which sense perception is your favorite?

Sight

Smell and taste

Hearing

Touch (physical connection)

No particular one

5. What do you desire?

To know

To have it all

To feel

To do

To just be

6. Which of these activities is most natural to you?

Learning something and then teaching it to others

Appreciating people and situations, hosting and embracing others

Having exciting interactions and communicating deeply

Creating and doing projects

Just being

7. Which emotions feel most familiar to you?

Anger, impatience, and irritation with confusing situations and overly-emotional people

Greed and pride fed by a poverty mentality

Clinging passion and comparison to others

Jealousy fed by paranoia and competitiveness

Ignorance or denial fed by insecurity

8. What do you fear?

Emotional intimacy

Not having enough

Boredom, mediocrity, and rejection

Failure

Intrusion

9. What does your "stuckness" look like?

Page 6 of 10

The mind becomes tied in knots by convoluted logic
Self-pity, neediness, hunger for more, or overwhelmed
Obsession, unfulfilled desires, or addiction to intensity
Overdrive leading to exhaustion; depletion
Indifference, ambivalence, or denial

10. What do you do to take care of yourself when you are upset?

Take some space and have patience until I come to clarity
Seek confirmation from others and reconnect to my own richness
Seek confirmation from others that I am lovable and feel lovable
Remember to slow down
Realize that nothing is a big deal

11. How are you most often when you are with others?

Detached and logical
The center of attention
Intimate and emotional
Active, making things happen
Spacious, simple

12. What is your best interpersonal style with friends and coworkers?

Clear-minded
Embracing and appreciative
Empathetic and communicative
Direct, straightforward
Accommodating

13. How do you get stuck in your relationships?

By insisting on being right; by being intolerant, opinionated, critical, and sharp
By being possessive, overbearing, and demanding too much time and attention
By being clinging then rejecting, exhibiting a love/hate dynamic, trying too hard to please
By being businesslike, confrontational, and controlling
By being aloof, not caring, and spacing out

14. What capacities or mental abilities do you have?

Holding the overview; facility with logic and reasoning; using structures and patterns
Comprehensive and thorough
Intuitive and able to discriminate fine points
Turning thought into action without hesitation
Spacious and accommodating

15. What is your learning style?

Intellectual, using analysis, abstractions, and general principles

Amassing information; doing research

Intuitive, using imagery, creative expression, and empathetic communication

By doing; trial and error

Repetition using simple, basic concepts; sleeping on it; osmosis

16. What is your style of thinking and use of language?

Clear, orderly, and precise

Thorough, circular, comprehensive, and elaborate

Individualistic, intuitive, creative, and feeling-based, using analogy and metaphor

Speedy, matter-of-fact, and pragmatic; could be manipulative

Simple, slow

17. What ways of knowing do you feel comfortable with?

Seeing the big picture and its details

Retaining large amounts of information

From the heart, intuitive, and by association

Seeing how things work

By just being

18. Which of these do you concern yourself with?

Boundaries, making things right, and having discipline

Wanting to encompass everything and everyone

Communication, self-image, and pleasure

Making sure things get done

Non-doing

19. Where do you get preoccupied?

Trying to make things the way I think they should be

Wanting to possess

Not knowing where I stand in relationships

Needing to get it done

Sticking my head in the sand, getting absorbed

20. When do you feel most productive?

Knowing the answers, being right

Being resourceful

Making relationships and genuine contact

Planning and managing

Making things simple

21. When do you feel most ineffective?

Not feeling right or perfect

Feeling inadequate, inferior, and unworthy

Feeling incomplete, lonely, and depressed
Feeling incompetent; performance anxiety
Not certain who I am

22. What is your defense mechanism or coping strategy?

Sticking to my own view; distancing myself
Arrogance; amassing anything spiritual or material
Wanting to please; ingratiating
Taking control
Shutting down; tunnel vision

23. What does your leadership look like at its best?

Calming or pacifying situations; giving the overview in simple terms; giving clarity, meaning, and understanding
Recognizing people's potential so their richness is revealed; offering resources; seeing the richness of diversity; being generous
Making heart connections; being tuned in to others; having a sense of playfulness; sharing in playful creativity; bringing out people's passions
Knowing what to do; knowing when to do and refrain from doing; making things happen; taking action fearlessly and with a sense of ease; being able to say no
Being and letting be; being flexible and accommodating

24. What do you like in teamwork?

Clear communication
More information
Personal connection
Speedy efficiency
On-the-spot brainstorming

25. What do you need from your supervisor?

Specific direction
Networking leads
Confirmation and encouragement
An action plan
Independence

26. What is the essential quality of your wisdom?

Insightful clarity
Equanimity
Intuitive discrimination
All-accomplishing action
All-encompassing space

Note, if you haven't done so already, that the five possibilities are in this order: vajra (clarity), ratna (richness), padma (passion), karma (activity), and buddha (spaciousness). Make a tally of how many you had in each energy. What did you find out? Are you more aware of ways you manifest and interact with others, when you shine and when you get stuck?

Unfolding yourself to yourself is never boring. You are a rich mixture of the five wisdom energies. You can reveal yourself as multidimensional and very colorful. When you miss the opportunity to be fully in the world, you miss your life.