

Vive la difference!

A well-developed person will have a pretty good balance within themselves, but the essence of each is different, and, if we reject one, thinking the other is somehow better, then we reject a major aspect of ourselves.



By Jacqueline Hellyer

"Women's essence is to be soft on the outside and strong on the inside, whereas men's is to be strong on the outside and soft on the inside".

Some people have a negative reaction to my saying this. There is a strong belief in our society, particularly among intelligent, well educated people, that men and women are equal. We are, absolutely, but we are not 'the same'. Vive la difference!

Sure, we should have social, political and economic equality between the sexes. But that doesn't mean we are or should be the same. Quite the opposite, it's the dynamic tension between the male and female energies that keeps sex strong and powerful in a relationship.

Ideally in a sexual encounter the man opens up his strong exterior and invites the woman into his soft interior where she can completely let go, safe inside the space he's created. There she can let her strength manifest, resulting in extraordinary sexual responses.

Interestingly, what is happening energetically is the opposite of what's happening physically: physically the man enters the woman, energetically the woman enters the man (and how scary and vulnerable can that make the man!).

Similarly, in a relationship, the man holds the space in which the woman can blossom and reach her potential. He's like the pot and she's the plant. It's essential that he is a pot big enough to hold her or she will be 'bonsai-ed', held back, and not reach her full potential – either that or the pot will crack from the pressure. (Fortunately the analogy has its limitations, and unlike pots, men can grow and develop to become big enough for their woman!)

If a woman tries to be like a man, strong on the outside, she denies her softness and hides her inner strength. She can't enter into him and feel his support. She'll feel she's doing it all on her own, which is tiring and brittle. Ultimately, she will feel the lack of connection with her man and they will bounce off each other (if he's maintaining his strength on the outside), or she'll feel nothing from him (if he's turned too feminine and gone soft on the outside).

Now, everyone does have masculine and feminine energies. A well-developed person will have a pretty good balance within themselves, but the essence of each is different, and, if we reject one, thinking the other

is somehow better, then we reject a major aspect of ourselves. So let's look at what is the 'feminine' and the 'masculine'....

VALUING THE FEMININE

We grossly undervalue the feminine in this society. Yes, we had women's liberation in the 70s, and that was a great thing, which has led to a definite improvement in the status of women. However, to achieve that status, women had to prove that they could be like men, which they did. That's fine, but all that did was show that women could be masculine. It didn't raise the value of the feminine, which is why several decades on women find they have to be masculine to succeed in society.

True strength in a woman comes energetically from being soft on the outside and strong on the inside. In fact it's only by being soft on the outside that her inner strength can emanate. Otherwise she's creating a false strength on the outside, which is hard to sustain, is brittle and prevents her true strength from blossoming.

I want to stress that I am NOT talking about women being soft and weak and pathetic. That people think that's what I'm talking about is just proof that our society devalues the feminine. It is strong to be soft. We need more of the feminine in this society. We need women to embrace their essential selves.

A woman can then express her femininity in many different ways (I've come up with 14 different feminine sexual archetypes, ranging from 'tough' to 'gentle' and everything in between). There is no limitation in how she expresses herself as a woman. The important thing is that she is real and embraces the power and glory of being a woman.

VALUING THE MASCULINE

Just as we undervalue the feminine in our society, we also get the masculine wrong.

Since we've had a few thousand years of not valuing the feminine, in place we've had an unnatural, overly arrogant masculine. A masculine defined more by the ability to dominate and control than one defined by true strength and openness.

So there has been a complete imbalance in society with a weak feminine and dominant masculine. With the social changes over the past decades, many people are changing. However, just as too many women reject the 'weak' feminine and adopt a harsh and controlling energy; too many men reject the 'dominant' masculine, and adopt an

overly soft, let's face it, fairly insipid, energy. So many of my female clients complain that their man is not a man, and so many of my male clients confess that they don't really know what it is to be a man.

The essence of a man is to be strong on the outside and soft on the inside. It is his place to go off and fight dragons and save damsels in distress, but it is equally his place to come home and honour his woman, to write her poetry, bring her gifts, and love and adore her. In this way she knows she can depend on him, yet he also opens himself to her, lets her inside. In doing this, he allows her to let go and show her real self too.

FINDING THE BALANCE

So many people are confused by how they should be, and I believe this is because we have polarised the masculine and feminine so strongly. No woman wants to be a pathetic doormat, but is the only alternative to be an arrogant domineering male clone? No self-aware man wants to be a macho shit, but is the only alternative to be sensitive new age wimp?

Not at all. However, it is only when we understand the masculine and feminine energies as equal complements, yin and yang, that we can embrace both of them within ourselves, and through that within our society.

We're not 'opposite' sexes, we're 'complementary' sexes. Both are strong, both are soft, both protect, both nurture. But the essence of each is different. That is what every man and every woman has to find within themselves to become whole.

If he is too much the wimp, she'll have to do the holding herself, and won't be able to let go. If he's too much the macho shit, she won't be able to get inside him and they'll stay separated.

These are variations of these dynamics I see all the time, but once the man 'gets' it, and the woman 'gets' it, then magic starts happening.

Author's note: this has been written for a heterosexual audience, a similar dynamic also needs to apply in same sex relationships.



Jacqueline Hellyer is one of Australia's foremost media sexperts, author, sex therapist and workshop leader. Her knowledge and experience, from the scientific to the tantric, is as broad as it gets and she shares it in an incredibly open and inspiring way. She enables people to become fully in touch with their sexuality and to use this powerful energy to create extraordinary lives for themselves.