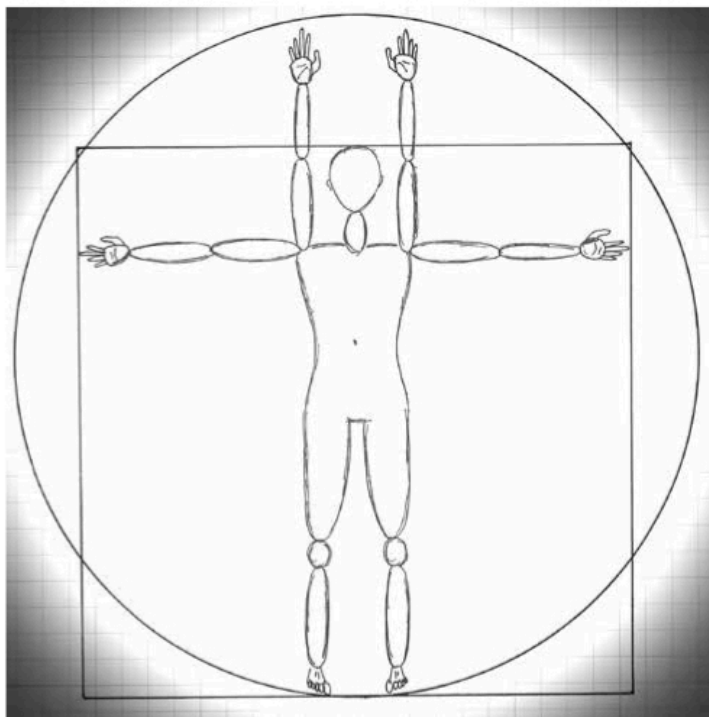


CHAPTER FOUR



The archetype of four is a frame drawn to define boundaries. Four is primal; four points of contact places you on the planet like an animal.

The Magic Connections and Contacts

The body is a connected whole. By virtue of everything being designed with pattern, there is a pattern that permeates the body as well. Within the palm of the hand, you find the whole body, and the same goes for the ear, the eye, each piece. Based on Chinese medicine and perceiving pattern within the human body, there are numerous magical connections to be aware of. The more obvious ones will be described below.

First and foremost, yoga is math, and anything that uses number is magical. Number transcends language and is accessible to everyone, in every culture and every era. In your personal practice, always look to the archetype for a measure. For instance, when you are in a standing forward fold and the knees fit into the armpits it ensures the muscles of the back are not too strong and that you are in the hip joint, which aligns the pelvis. If the fit isn't there, you know the pose still has personal habits moving through. The archetype is so you know where you are in time and space and you can point yourself in a direction. The practice is not to strive for perfection; instead, it is used as a means to measure form, to become informed about where your form does not add up. The more information you have about yourself, the easier life becomes. When you understand your own motivations and actions, you can decide whether your behaviour needs to be adjusted. The whole cosmos is designed with archetypes, earth being just a small piece, and by virtue of pattern, man is no different. We are designed in archetypal proportion, and this measure is used to map out the body. This design of the body is broken down in each posture, described later in this book. You can use the tools in this book to put yourself in a posture and learn where certain habits have settled. The poses then work to clear out habits from the body. Elucidated below are patterns of the most common habits and where they show up in the body.

Imagine the body as the Eiffel Tower. Within the body there are beams running up and down, side to side, and cross-referencing. All these currents interconnect to create a dialogue and a circuitry in the body that is constantly receiving information from the external environment, which then moves through into the mind. As your internal vision becomes clearer, you can begin to make sense of these connections. It is because of these connections that a localized pain in the body is typically from a different source than where the pain is felt. The issue typically stems from a misalignment of form in which circuitry is blocked. It is important to know the interconnections as they will empower you to readjust the body to be in the best position for current to move unencumbered.

The organs work as a whole, and when one piece is off, the whole system is off. The Chinese five-element theory, or *Wu Xing*, recognizes and utilizes the pattern of the organs. The liver feeds the heart, the heart nurtures the spleen, the spleen mothers the lungs, the lungs nurture the kidneys, and the kidneys repeat the cycle by feeding the liver. This happens again and again because life is redundant, repetitive, and mundane, and within this repetition lies the opportunity for insight, revolution, and a revelation that becomes revelatory.

The Kidneys

The kidneys are the toilets of the body, and it is their nature to filter fluids. These waters are your fluency and fluidity. Any midpoint in the body will manipulate the kidneys and is used to measure equilibrium. Kidneys are in the midpoint of the body physically; therefore, as pattern permeates throughout the body, any midpoint will play with kidneys. This includes the arches of the feet, the knees, the elbows, and the ears. Lining up all these planes so they cross parallel to the ground ensures the equilibrium in the kidneys is maintained. Locked knees inhibit current from moving through the kidneys, for example, in downward dog pose. Most practitioners come into dog pose with straight legs and the heels on the ground. This is incorrect form that uses muscles instead of the folds of the joints, forcing the practitioner to work like a labourer. This way, you will work too hard in the shoulders, the competency, instead of finding the stability of the lower body. When the knees are bent and heels are lifted, the lower back can maintain its natural wave so the sacral plate is spacious and the kidneys don't need to overwork. This calms your waters.

Kidneys are spherical; they are one's hearing and one's adrenals. Hearing puts you in your safety, and the kidneys are all about the physical safety of being embodied in the planet. To hear circumferentially is to hear all around your sphere. This allows you to participate in the senses, so although you can't see behind the back, you can hear the acoustics behind you. The first powers of yoga are the *siddhas*, and the *siddhas* are the senses. Can you hear it, articulate it, nuance it, make sense of it? Hearing issues are kidney issues, and within the frame of the body in the postures, the kidneys are set by the geometry of the two hips to the two knees.

Kidneys put you in the dialogue of inheritance, your genetic stock, the fluency to get around situations in the depths. The left kidney is from the maternal, the right, the paternal. You are in the centre, weaving a dialogue between *mater* and *pater*.

The Liver

The job of the liver is to see angles. There are three angles: acute, obtuse, and right. An acute angle hones in, creating heat. An obtuse angle looks out and is a bit cool. A right angle holds virtue and gives you access to every angle. The trick is not to be straight but to own your own angles.

The gateway to the liver is through the eyes. Any issue in the eyes is a manifestation of a liver imbalance. The pituitary and liver are linked, sharing a dialogue with that of vision and reflective memory. The pituitary is your circumferential view, using side-view mirrors. If you are constantly getting blindsided, it is a pituitary issue.

The liver is the chemical processing plant and stores blood as you sleep. All of the body's chemistry moves through the liver, so it is very easy for the liver to become taxed. The liver plans, and if the liver is taxed you cannot plan well. It filters toxins,

and when your body is in good health, the toxins will not build as fast. However, if you eat a poor diet, drink alcohol, or consume coffee or black tea, the toxins in the liver will build, leading to impaired functioning. The liver also controls the sinews (tendons), and if the liver is nourished, the joints should move smoothly. The outgrowth of the liver is in the nails. All of the poses that work the liver in spring should flush the thighs, lungs, liver, and eyes. The liver is connected with the right hand, the ability to go out into the world and make the deal. Most people have overworked livers, as our culture is trained to go out into the world more than we are taught to deal with our heart. Our planet is also very polluted, so the liver is constantly overworked. The frame of the liver is from shoulders to hips, and when this frame is off the liver cannot filter effectively.

The dialogue of liver is that of the linear. Time moves in a linear fashion; twelve o'clock is in front, three o'clock is at the right arm, six o'clock is at the centre of the back, and nine o'clock is the left arm. The liver feeds the heart by moving through time. If the torso looks out to the left, always seeing the sunrise in the east, then the heart receives too much heat as the wood from the liver fuels the fire of the heart. The heart always wants to sing out to two o'clock, the world, where the sun sets.

The Heart

The heart is your fire, your complexion, and your quality of sweat. The hand is a miniature heart, so whatever is happening in the hand is also happening in the heart. The left hand is the heart and left lung. The right hand is the liver and right lung. The heart vibrates; therefore, the hand is vibratory and allows you to interact with the world around. Again, the heart sings when it looks out into the world at two o'clock. It is only by moving forward that the heart can experience joy, because joy is not found in memory. We cannot live in the past, but only in the moment, moving forward.

The heart is connected to the tongue; therefore, the heart governs our speech. The lungs govern the tonality by virtue of the breath and the chamber space of the lungs, but the heart speaks through this tonality. The ability to articulate your speech, to become fluent in turning thoughts into words, and to learn to hold your tongue is all in the dialogue of the heart. Any stutters are heart issues, which signify a missing ingredient that makes up its fire: oxygen, spark, and fuel. Cross-referencing shoulders to hips (right hip to left shoulder, left hip to right shoulder) will set up the crossroads of consciousness and allow you to move circuitry through the heart. The pinky finger is the heart; in the postures, when too much weight is on the pinky finger knuckle, the heart will have too much heat in it as the pressure builds. You want the pinky finger in line with the side of the palm to take some heat out of the heart and ensure the current does not break circuit (as when the pinky overextends).

The Spleen

The spleen is your muscles, the mind. A dense muscle is a dense mind. Muscles are the rivers that current moves through, and when muscles are dense, when the body is rigid, current gets blocked. Muscle should be supple and soft. When rivers flow unobstructed, water remains clear and the course is fluid.

The state of your muscles is the state of your mind and vice versa. In our culture, most people are deficient in their spleen. This is the energy we take from the planet in the form of food and water. We live stressful lives and are constantly overstimulated. We then eat foods that are not conducive to health; therefore, our spleen's capacity becomes weakened. A weak spleen is a weak mind, clouded thinking, mind fog, and a feeling of sluggish heaviness. When we overthink, over chew, and over ponder, our muscles become dense as we take all of the air out of them. This is akin to an over-chewed piece of gum. The spleen is important; we need it to exercise good judgement.

The sinking of the arches is a heaviness in the spleen and the kidneys. Lips are the gateway to the spleen, and the mouth is the gateway to the stomach. Our lips tell a lot about the quality of our spleen. The inside of the mouth has a dialogue with the stomach. Sores, blisters, dry mouth, and the like all indicate stomach issues.

The Lungs

The lungs are our competency. Arms are extensions of lungs, and the frame of the lungs is from both shoulders to both hands. If this frame is off, the corresponding lung is off. If one arm is easier to balance on, say in dog pose, this is the stronger lung. Lungs are big bellows, and they extract and distribute the *Prana* from the atmosphere into the body. *Prana* is not air—it is space dust, and these ions, ores, and minerals of the planet are raining down as a food source to fuel the body and mind. Setting up the cross-reference of right nipple to left shoulder blade and left nipple to right shoulder blade will allow you to fill and empty your lungs with more dimensionality. More should be demanded out of each breath so the lungs use their capacity to the fullest. Looking at each big toe mound will show you how pumped up the lungs are. The big toe mounds should look like ping-pong balls when looked at from the side (as when the feet are together in bound angle pose).

Breath is linked to the lungs, and a sighing breath is a signal the lungs are constricted. This constriction is magnetic and brings about depression. Learning to leverage the lungs brings out their virtue, courage. The skin is the third lung, and the ability of the pores to draw in the planet's energy is the ability of the lungs to take in air well. Your pores are constantly breathing. Lungs govern your voice—its strength, tonality, and clarity. A quiet, low voice just means the lungs aren't being utilized well.

Smelling is the function of the lungs and is the only sense that circuits directly into the brain. When you smell something, you travel through time, and if the scent elicits memory, the visual centre of your brain will become active. Losing the sense of smell is the first sign of dementia as it is a signal that the mind and memory are going.

Further Dialogue

Framing the face with hands on opposite elbows, upper arm bones in line with ears, flushes the kidneys. Contact of the tongue on the palate opens up your central channel of fire and water. Contact always initiates conversation, and any time you make contact you are establishing a circuit.

When using the information of the body, pattern will show itself everywhere. If you stand hard in the heel of the foot, you will also sit back on the tail and the heel of the hand and overwork the jaw. Any piece that is over- or underworked will show itself everywhere. A right eye issue will be in the index finger mound and big toe mound as the right side of the body is found in the thumb side and big toe side of the hand and foot. A left eye issue will be in the pinky mound of both hand and foot. A flat eyeball is a flat butt. The piece reflects the whole, and within the whole are all the pieces.

The fingers are your vision, and each finger represents a specific piece in the body. The thumb gains perspective and is connected to the liver. The index fingers participate, and they are the lungs. The middle finger is the ability to think; it is the spleen. The ring finger is the circuit of health, the small intestine, and the pinky finger is your speech, residing in the heart. Each hand represents a slightly different aspect per finger. The right hand has to do with the world, and the left hand holds the heart. Each finger represents itself in regards to which hand it is on. Looking deeper will allow these magical connections to unfold.

Engage in a dialogue with yourself in the practice until you really know the conversations taking place as you make contact. This takes practice, repetition, and the trained ability to perceive pattern. The true magic is the ability to use the poses, the breath, and the mind, making each aspect work for you in integration.

The postures on the following pages are to be used as a metaphor. Whatever you are doing on the mat, you are doing in the body. If you always hang back in the heels, then you always hang back in memory. If you tip too far forward onto the balls of the feet, there is too much anxiety and you risk tripping. The postures are an effective means to manipulate your habits, to see the bigger picture, and to create more space for joy. Let the insights of the body unfold and reveal your inner world. The magic lies in using the techniques consistently to achieve well-being.