THE TILTED SCALES

Pooja Bansal is a Mumbai-based artist, entrepreneur and writer. After fifteen years in corporate finance, she stepped away in 2018 to pursue art, later founding House of Curations. Her own journey through ambition, relationships and personal change inspired The Tilted Scales, an exploration of the balance between striving and slowing down, giving and receiving, doing and being. Through her art and writing, she invites us to make space for the parts of ourselves we may have left behind.

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India | U.K.

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ISBN: 978-81-69906-40-1

Cover Design: Deepak Katheria
Typesetting: Manisha Rawat

First Edition: October 2026

Author's Note

This book is not written only for women, or only for men. It is written for anyone and everyone who has ever felt the quiet exhaustion of carrying too much, or felt the chaos and aggression in the world around, or felt the quiet hunger of a part of themselves left unused. That is where this book began – with a question I could not stop asking myself: why does the same imbalance, exhaustion and chaos, keep showing up, in every relationship, every workplace, every home, every nation, as if it were one story wearing a thousand different faces?

I did not write this as a self-help book, nor as a prescription. I wrote it because somewhere in these pages, I hope you will recognise that the chaos you carry is not yours alone – that it is being carried, in some form, by almost everyone around you – whether they agree with it or not. And if that recognition can offer you, even the first step out of that chaos, if not the whole way through, then this book will have done what I hoped it would. Read this book, not only for some answers, but for the company on the way to finding your own.

I would like you to note that the conversations with the United States and India, and the election experiment, in this book are imagined. They do not represent actual events, statements, interviews, or official positions of any government, official, or nation. They are a literary device, that have been used as a way of giving voice to patterns the author observed in public life, history, and current events, written to provoke reflection rather than to report fact.

The cases described throughout this book, except my case, are not accounts of real individuals. They are composite and fictional narratives, and illustrative stories shaped by the author's observations of common human patterns and drawn from a wide range of sources – conversations, workshops, stories, books, films, and general life experience.

Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or to actual events, is coincidental. Names, circumstances, and details have been invented for the purpose of illustration.

Certain real historical and public figures are named in this book like Rani Lakshmibai, Sarojini Naidu, Boudica, Indira Gandhi, and Margaret Thatcher as historical illustration, and the author's characterisation of their energy is her own interpretation of their public record, not a claim to know their private lives or motivations. They are not part of the fictional case studies described above.

This book brings together lived experience, reflection and the author's understanding of Yin and Yang. It does not claim to establish medical causes or offer a substitute for medical care.

The interpretations, frameworks, and conclusions offered in this book – including the application of Yin and Yang energy to personal, relational, organisational, and national life – reflect the author's personal perspective, shaped by her own experience, study, and reflection. They are offered as one way of understanding these patterns, not as established fact, clinical diagnosis, or professional advice in any field, including medicine, psychology, or law.

I invite you to read this book with an open mind. Some of what follows may feel familiar, some of it may challenge you, and some of it may simply be a story to sit with. Wherever and whatever you meet, I hope you enjoy the journey – through the countries, the cases, and the quieter moments in between.

If even one page makes you pause, or shows you the same imbalance wearing a different face than the one you started with, this book has done its work. I hope you find your way to balance – and I hope, somewhere in these pages, you find a piece of yourself.

A Note of Gratitude

To God,

For staying with me at every step of this journey. For guiding me when the path felt uncertain, holding me steady when I doubted myself, and giving me the strength to continue when the words felt difficult to carry.

This book began as a question, but it became a journey of faith. In moments when I did not know where the next page would lead, I felt guided. In moments when I felt vulnerable, I felt protected. And in moments when I wondered whether I should continue, I found the courage to take one more step.

I am deeply grateful for the unseen presence that held me through every thought, every realisation, and every word.

And to my mother,

Thank you for believing in what I was doing, even before the book had fully taken shape.

You believed in the questions I was asking and in the thoughts I was trying to express. You encouraged me to write—not only to create a book, but to give voice to what I had experienced, observed, and carried within me.

You reminded me that expression itself can be an act of courage.

Thank you for motivating me to trust my voice, to put my thoughts into words, and to take the leap of faith this book required. Your belief gave me strength in the moments when my own belief wavered.

This book carries a part of your faith in me.

With all my gratitude,

Your child.

Prologue

The Room

She was not a doctor.

There was no white coat, no examination table, no screen full of clinical measurements. The room was quiet in the way that rooms rarely are anymore – no phone buzzing on a desk, no assistant knocking, no urgency seeping under the door.

She had asked me to tell her not just my health problems, but the years before it. How I had lived. What I had carried. What I had pushed through and pushed aside.

And so I told her – the way you tell someone when you have finally run out of reasons to be efficient about it.

I told her about the two decades of forward motion. About the marriage, the career, the children, the goals ticked off one by one. About the resilience I had worn like armour until I could no longer remember what it felt like to take it off. About the version of myself I had slowly, without noticing, replaced with someone harder and faster and louder.

She listened without interrupting.

And then she said something I was not prepared for.

When Yang overwhelms Yin – when the driving, forceful energies run unchecked for long enough – the system begins to strain. The body is not separate from what the mind refuses to feel. It simply finds another way to speak.

I remember the quality of the silence that followed.

Not the silence of confusion. The silence of recognition.

Something in my chest – not my heart, something deeper, older – went very still.

Because I had spent eight years of my life trying to correct an imbalance in my outer life. My marriage. My career. The way I moved through the world. And in all of that careful, deliberate work, I had not once asked whether the same imbalance was living inside me. In my body. In the quiet system that had been absorbing, for decades, everything I refused to feel.

The question that rose in me then was not comfortable.

Had I done this to myself? Not out of weakness. Not out of failure.

Out of strength. Out of relentless, unexamined, uninterrupted strength?

I did not have an answer.

But now I knew, for the first time, that I could no longer look for the answers outside.

Adenomyosis. Endometriosis. The uterine wall is significantly thickened. We strongly recommend surgical intervention.

The doctor had not looked up from the screen when she had said this a couple of years back from the time I went to meet this practitioner.

I had sat in the parked car outside the doctor's clinic for a long time.

One question had formed that I could not dismiss: How did I miss what my body had been carrying? And how did it happen? I was doing everything right – eating right, exercising, working, meditating.

To understand how I arrived in that room, I need to take you back. Eight years. And further.

What happened eight years back

There are moments in life that do not arrive with noise.

There is no crisis, no collapse, or no visible breaking. And yet, they change everything.

From the outside, nothing had seemed wrong. Life was moving forward. I was doing well in my corporate career. Responsibilities were getting fulfilled, goals were being pursued. For over two decades, I had been

living what many would call a fulfilled life – married, with two beautiful children, a successful career, money, holidays, everything.

But that day I felt different. Alienated from myself in a way I had no words for.

Like most journeys, mine was not always smooth. It required resilience – in my marriage, in my relationships, in a career that asked more than I had expected to give. So, I had done what many of us do: I adapted. I pushed forward even when things felt difficult.

I became the problem-solver. Took control. Managed outcomes. I earned independently, carried responsibilities with pride, and told myself this was what strength looked like.

And for a long time, it worked. Everything was falling into place. I believed.

Except me.

Because somewhere along the way, it seems, I had lost myself – my quieter self, the one who used to pause, take things in my stride, laugh out loud, feel, listen without already preparing a response.

I noticed the loss not dramatically, but in the smallest of moments. In how I spoke. In how quickly irritation had replaced patience. My voice had become sharper. My responses, harder. I raised my voice more often than I used to – not only at my new relationships, or my support staff, but even at people I loved back home. I now felt irritation and restlessness in my body.

Even to myself, I sounded unfamiliar. This was not me. I was not like this.

At that time, I did not have the language to describe what had happened.

I only knew I had changed.

How I got my First Clue

I had always been drawn to learning – workshops, courses, conversations that push on something inside you.

In one such session, eight years back, a speaker at an online workshop, had introduced a concept that had stayed with me – about Yin and Yang energies, and their imbalance. He spoke about how an imbalance between these two energies can quietly reshape who we are. How, over time, people begin to suppress their softer qualities in order to survive. And in doing so, they strengthen something else – the drive, the control, the intensity – until one energy begins to dominate entirely.

As he spoke, I had felt something uncomfortable in my body. As though he was describing my life to an audience of strangers.

For the first time, I could see it clearly: I had been operating almost entirely in aggressive, forceful energy of action, control, speed, and intensity. And slowly, in order to sail through the difficulty of my marriage, to excel and to succeed in my career, I had pushed away its counterpart – stillness, softness, reflection. I had left my old self behind. That part of me that once paused had simply disappeared.

The Big step

That realisation had stayed with me and, over time, turned into something I could act on.

I began observing myself – my patterns, my reactions, my discomfort with silence and stillness. I noticed, I had become way too practical and somewhat emotionless, or insensitive to emotions. After months of reflection, reading, and inner work, I made a decision that felt radical at the time: I decided to take a pause in my corporate career, which I felt, was one place which was making me more aggressive than I needed to be, so that I could balance my love for my work and my love for my family. I had been in motion for 15 years building a corporate career which had made my parents proud, and a family that I loved.

Now, I wanted to take a pause and reflect on myself and my constant desire to stay in motion, and in control. I decided to pursue my passion – to start a company of my own and build it at a pace that would give me time to create a balance between my family, my ambitions, and more importantly – myself.

The changes that followed were not dramatic. But they were real – in my relationships, at home, and most of all within me. I stayed with this new way of living for eight years, convinced that I had found the shift I was looking for.

What I did not understand was that I had been fixing the world outside, while leaving the world within me completely untouched – all the emotions related with adapting, adjusting, resilience, strength, juggling work to be available to my children, and now of leaving behind corporate growth, work that I had equally loved, building a new company, trying to make a strong foothold in a completely new area of work, and being more available to family.

That is the story of how I arrived in that quiet room.

The clinical diagnosis had sent me searching – through medical consultations, second opinions, alternative practitioners, ancient texts, and everything in between. And then, in that room, that practitioner's words arrived not as new information, but as a mirror held up to something I already, somewhere, knew, but never paid attention to.

The same imbalance I had spent eight years correcting in my marriage, my career, my relationships, it had been living inside me, as well, all along. In the body that had absorbed, for decades, everything the mind had refused to feel.

The questions that followed were not comfortable. But they were honest.

Had my decades of constant drive and suppressed stillness quietly created this imbalance inside my own body? Had I been so focused on rebalancing the world around me that I had ignored what was happening in the world within me?

I did not have answers. But for the first time, I stopped reaching for them outside.

And so, I decided to turn inward.

— ◆ —

Why this Book exists

That journey inward is what led me here.

This book is what I found when I did. And what I found was not just personal. The imbalance I had subjected myself to, was everywhere – in relationships, in workplaces, and in nations. In the way we have all, quietly and collectively, tilted too far in one direction.

These pages are an attempt to name that tilt – to trace it from within a single life all the way out to the world we share – and to ask what this imbalance is, how we can recognise where it exists and why, and whether we can find our way back to balance.

It begins as a set of questions – Not mine alone.

Why do we feel exhausted, disconnected, unsettled and unfulfilled, despite doing everything right?

Why do relationships look complete, but feel distant?

How do workplaces look successful, but feel draining?

Why are there so many illnesses today, which did not exist earlier, or were not so widespread?

Why do lives look full, but feel empty?

At first, everyone I spoke to found it easy to explain it away – as stress – as modern lifestyle problems. But over time, those explanations began to feel insufficient. Because what we are experiencing is not isolated – it is widespread. Across homes, across organisations, across societies. And insufficient explanations do not produce sufficient change.

This book exists because an older language – one that understood balance not as a lifestyle choice but as the architecture of a functioning life – feels urgently relevant today as an answer to our questions.

It is not a book of prescriptions. It is a book of recognition. Through illustrative cases of everyday situations, and lived patterns, it invites you to see something familiar. Not in the world alone, but in yourself.

Somewhere in these pages, you will recognise yourself.

And that recognition, it turns out, is where everything begins.

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Chapter 1

The Weight of Power & Progress

What follows below is not a political analysis but the author's imaginative conversations – an attempt to hear, in the voice of a nation, what power, and progress might say if they ever spoke about themselves.

Conversation 1: Interview with United States | world's foremost Economic & Military Power

In a grand yet dimly lit room, renowned journalist, Bob, sits across from a figure that fills the room – dressed in a suit, commanding, but carrying the particular tiredness of someone who has been powerful for a very long time. Behind them: the flags, the seals, the architecture of authority. Everything in the room has been designed to signal permanence.

JOURNALIST BOB: *Adjusts his notes, leans in, and asks,* "The world describes you in a particular set of words. Aggressive. Dominant. Interventionist. Unwilling to back down. Are those words you would choose for yourself or words you have simply stopped arguing with?"

THE U.S.: *Considers.* "I'd say they are words the world uses because they need a simple story because they expect me to lead, to be strong, to intervene. And that's what I do. But the truth is more complicated. Power isn't something I chose. It's something I inherited, and something I cannot exit. The moment I step back, someone else steps in. The world doesn't reward restraint. It fills vacuums."

JOURNALIST BOB: *Counters:* "But, in the process haven't you shaped the world in your favour with conditions that make restraint impossible? You write the rules of global trade, control the reserve currency, maintain military bases across the world. At what point does maintaining the system become indistinguishable from controlling it? "

THE U.S.: *Pauses.* "At a cost the world doesn't see - and that I am no longer certain was worth it."

JOURNALIST BOB: *Leans forward, and asks,* "Let's talk about tariffs and sanctions. When you impose them – on allies as readily as adversaries – are these economic instruments? Or are they your language of power? A way of saying: I can make your economy hurt, and I will, until you align with my interests?

Is it about protecting your economy, or has power simply changed its form to dominance disguised as policy?"

THE U.S.: *Almost smiles.* "Tariffs and sanctions are walls without bricks. Economic force is cleaner than military force. Less visible. Fewer casualties. If that's a language of power – and I won't pretend it isn't – it is at least a language that doesn't leave craters."

JOURNALIST BOB: "Cleaner for whom? For which country till now? Ordinary people in those countries have spent decades living inside your economic decisions. You speak of fewer casualties, but hunger and medicine shortages leave their own kind of damage."

THE U.S.: *Shifts.* "Every tool of pressure has a cost. I'm not naive about that. But the alternative is watching regimes consolidate power without consequence. If I don't apply pressure, who does?" *A short, dry pause.* "I think we both know the answer."

JOURNALIST BOB: “You've described yourself as a reluctant power – someone who acts because no one else will. But your defence budget is more than those of most countries. Your intelligence agencies operate in nearly every country on earth. At some point, doesn't the apparatus of power begin to generate the crises that justify it?”

THE U.S.: *Looks away for a moment.* "That's a fair question. And I don't have a clean answer to it. What I can tell you is that the world I operate in, rewards strength and punishes hesitation. Whether that world was designed by me, or whether I was designed by it – that’s a philosophical question I don't have the luxury of sitting with."

JOURNALIST BOB: "Let me ask something more direct then. Wars. Iraq. Afghanistan. Vietnam. Libya. Nations reshaped or destabilised in your wake. What is it that you truly stand to achieve – territory, influence, security, or something harder to admit? Control?"

THE U.S.: “Wars are rarely about what they appear to be. They are about positioning. About signalling. About ensuring that no one else takes your place. Because if I don’t, someone else will. The cost of not acting – of being seen to hesitate – is higher than the cost of acting badly. That is not a defence. That is simply the logic of the position I'm in.”

JOURNALIST BOB: “Is there a version of you that would choose differently – a road not taken?”

THE U.S.: *Long silence.* "Every generation inherits the consequences of the last one's answer. My history is one of difficult choices. Every expansion came at a cost – but so does every retreat. The world does not give medals for restraint."

JOURNALIST BOB: "What about your domestic reality? You have the highest rate of gun deaths, and an alarmingly growing rate of depression, in the developed world.

A substantial part of the population without adequate healthcare. If your model of power is so effective, then why has it not solved the problems within your own borders?"

THE U.S.: *A flicker of something uncomfortable*. "Because the same forces that built my power – individualism, competition, the refusal to accept limitation – also resist the kind of collective action that solves domestic crises. It is the same engine. It runs hot in both directions."

JOURNALIST BOB: "So, in building your power, have you lost touch with your sensitive side – compassion, collaboration, emotional intelligence?"

THE U.S.: "The world sees me as a warrior, not a nurturer. I am admired for my might, not my grace. When my leaders negotiate, they talk about strength, strategy, and supremacy."

JOURNALIST BOB: *Challenges:* "You have never had a female president. Not because capable women haven't existed – they have, in every generation. Is it that your system doesn't select for a particular gender, or that it selects for a particular kind of force that most women have been wise enough to refuse?"

THE U.S.: *Leans forward.* "Our system rewards what it has always rewarded. Those who rise within it have learned its language. Whether that language needs translation – that is a question for another generation. The system does not change its requirements for anyone."

JOURNALIST BOB: "Can you change? Not your policies – you. The character of the power you project?"

THE U.S.: *Smiles faintly.* "Change… into what?

Power is not something you experiment with. The moment I soften, someone else will harden. And if I pause, someone else will move. The world wants direction and dominance.

If I don't set the rules, someone else will.

What you call aggression. I call survival. What you call dominance. I call my responsibility – as the one that everyone else is depending on – whether they admit it or not.

I am the world's superpower. Nations don't just watch me. They depend on me. If I change, I don't just risk losing power. I risk losing the identity that was built around holding it. And I am not certain there is anything left underneath it. That is perhaps the most honest thing I have said in this conversation."

A moment of silence.

JOURNALIST BOB: *Does not look at his notes this time*. "Then let me leave you with one final question.

Have you ever wondered what would happen if the enormous power you have spent generations protecting were used just as deliberately to protect something larger than yourself?

You have the wealth, influence, reach and status to alter the direction of nations. To make compassion powerful. To make collaboration aspirational. To make peace carry as much prestige as victory.

If the world changes when you intervene, have you ever asked yourself what kind of world you could create if you chose to intervene differently?

Does that possibility ever cross your mind?"

The U.S. does not answer.

For the first time, the silence is not about what power fears losing.

It is about what power may have forgotten it is capable of creating.

The camera cuts. There is unease but with a sense of pride in the air. And the truth hiding behind something heavy.

— ◆ —

Power becomes Poison | Unprecedented rise in the need to be Supreme

We live in a world that rewards aggression, glorifies conquest, and mistakes control for leadership – a world where softness is weakness, vulnerability is shameful, and compassion is considered optional.

Leadership was once about service. Now it's about supremacy.

When power becomes its own justification, the people it was meant to serve become secondary to the system built to hold it. And the leaders who rise within that system are those that show their willingness to adapt and perform with strength, loudly and without doubt.

True leadership provides safety and direction. But when it loses empathy and sensitivity, it does not evolve. It erodes – first the balance, then values, and then the very humanity it claimed to protect.

Unchecked dominance does not create legacy. It creates exhaustion, resistance, and eventual decline. Not because those in power are bad or incompetent, but because strength without reflection risks losing not just relevance, but its meaning.

Perhaps the true measure of power is not how much of the world it can command, but how much good it can make possible.

Perhaps one day, leadership will no longer be about proving strength – but about holding it wisely. And when that day comes, power will no longer feel like a burden.

It will feel like what it was always meant to be.

Conversation 2: Interview with India, one of the world's fastest growing economies

A celebrated journalist, Mira, sits across from a personified version of India. India, dressed in a kurta beneath a sharp modern blazer, the kind of combination that looks deliberate and uneasy in equal measure, carrying the weight of history and the burden of progress. Behind them a backdrop of modern skyscrapers on one side, crumbling roads and overfilled slums on the other. The contrast is not symbolic. It is simply true.

JOURNALIST MIRA: *Adjusts her microphone, leans in, and asks,* "India, the world calls you an emerging superpower, a rising force in technology, economy, and global influence.

Do you think that is all that you would like to be known for now – Power and competition?"

INDIA: *Smiles.* "I have always been more than what the world defines me as. I was a civilization before they called me a country.

Power is not my pursuit. Growth is. But in this world, if you don't show strength, you're ignored. If you don't compete, you're left behind."

JOURNALIST MIRA: *More interested.* "Tell us more about your transformation."

INDIA: *Reflects on its rapid transformation. From colonial rule to economic powerhouse. A mix of pride and nostalgia.* "For years, I was underestimated. They called me the land of poverty, of struggle.

But look at me now. Start-ups, digital revolutions, space missions. I had to fight for respect. And I earned it."

JOURNALIST MIRA: "Right. You are called one of the fastest-growing economies, an IT giant, a spacefaring nation. They call you the next superpower, the world's back office, the land of opportunity.

But behind the growing economic numbers, there's another reality. You spend billions on infrastructure, yet your roads remain broken.

Your people celebrate GDP growth, but millions still sleep hungry. You wear a crown of technology, yet women fear to walk your streets at night.

Indian cities rank among the most polluted in the world.

Is this progress, or is this the deepest failure of development. Progress that has not translated into humanity?"

INDIA: *Quiet for a moment before answering. The voice measured, but underneath it something that sounds less like confidence than like a person explaining a choice they are no longer certain about.* "This is not by choice. This is the cost of proving my worth to the world.

I am judged by GDP – by how fast my economy will grow, how many factories I can build, how many billions I can attract. My political survival depends on numbers.

Growth produces visible results – a factory creates jobs, a highway opens, a satellite launches. The damage it creates is slower, quieter, and maybe, easier to ignore.

I have a massive population, large part illiterate, and the remaining part in a hurry to achieve something. I have limited social security, and millions who cannot afford idealism.

When the choice is between a job in polluted city and no job, I choose the first one. Clean transitions require money, patience, and governance capacity. Three things I rarely have at the same time."

JOURNALIST MIRA: "You speak of cost.

You once taught the world Ayurveda, Yoga, balance, and preventive health. Today your people survive on antibiotics, inhalers, and painkillers. You chose rapid urbanisation instead, and sold wellness as a luxury-export to other countries while neglecting it as a domestic policy?

Yoga became branding, not living. You traded domestic cost for development."

INDIA: *Sighs.* "Yes. Every step forward demands a sacrifice.

I am an ancient civilization expanding into a modern world. I am torn between tradition and progress, between the gods of my past and the skyscrapers of my future.

I teach my children about my glorious heritage but send them abroad for a better life. I fight for gender equality, yet my women still battle patriarchy every day. I am growing, but I am also bleeding.

I watch my rivers shrink, my air grow heavy, my fields struggle against concrete. My people, too, are divided – between old and new, rich and poor, progress and preservation – between Bharat and India."

A moment of silence.

JOURNALIST MIRA: "Let's address the uncomfortable truth. Why do you continue to tolerate, and sometimes amplify, the image of being a poor nation? Do you like winning Oscar awards for showcasing your poverty?"

INDIA: *Shifting uncomfortably.* "You can say, it is a label that buys me time, and lowers expectations. As a developing country, I am forgiven for broken roads, unsafe women, polluted rivers, and collapsing cities.

If I claimed to be fully developed, the world, and my own citizens, would demand accountability.

Given the demographics of the country, the outlook of the people towards holding themselves responsible and accountable for cleanliness,

with patience, the internal divide of cultures, states and Gods, the growing population… I am not yet prepared to deliver.

Real development would slow me down. It would force me to confront governance failures, social inequality, patriarchy, and environmental collapse. Scale allows me to postpone those conversations."

JOURNALIST MIRA: "Do you think you have lost your identity in this journey? Does it seem like India has become more masculine in its approach? And is the price of power worth it?"

INDIA: *India looks past Mira for a moment, as though the answer is somewhere in the middle distance. Each decision pushing India forward but leaving something behind.*

"Men here, still hesitate to follow, and doubt a woman's leadership, unless she fits the narrative.

I once produced Rani Lakshmibai – a woman who fought when men stepped back, and visionaries like Sarojini Naidu. And yet today, my politics has no space for that kind of woman unless she learns to sound like a man first. Politics has become a battleground, not a place of wisdom and wellness.

JOURNALIST MIRA: "Do you think you can change and find a new balance?"

INDIA: "Yes, Power alone is empty. What I seek is recognition. I do not want to be feared; I want to be respected. I do not want to dominate; I want to inspire.

They want me to be Silicon Valley and the Himalayas at the same time. A global factory and an ancient soul. It is not easy to be both, and the attempt to be both is costing me parts of myself that I cannot easily recover.

My people feel numb. When filth becomes normal, no one demands clean cities. When dysfunction is inherited, excellence feels optional.

And when the pace of change is celebrated more than its direction, an essential part of development gets left at the side of the road.

I will be ready when my people stop celebrating growth that costs them their breath. When dignity matters more than speed. When they choose to slow down – not because they cannot afford to move fast, but because they finally understand what they are losing in that haste.

I need to find again my ability to nurture, to care, to love – to be the civilisation I was before the world taught me to perform.

Perhaps I will. Perhaps my people and I will find our way back to something more whole.

But until then", *India pauses, and almost smiles,* "we will continue this path we have agreed to call 'Development'."

JOURNALIST MIRA: *Looks at India for a moment before asking* "I have this final question for you: Not long ago, as per newspaper reports, it took one young boy, roughly ₹30,000 of his own money, to begin cleaning a river by himself.

One person. One decision. One willingness to act.

You have budgets far greater than that. You have governments, municipalities, engineers, and thousands of workers. And yet, year after year, money allocated for change remains unutilised, while your rivers stay polluted, roads remain broken, buildings decay, garbage gathers along their edges, and entire cities learn to live with what should never have become normal.

Have you ever wondered what India could look like if the willingness matched the resources? If every state decided that dignified public spaces and basic civic beauty were not cosmetic ambitions, but a measure of development itself?"

India does not answer.

For a moment, the question hangs between what the country lacks – and what it may already have.

Perhaps development was never waiting for more resources.

Perhaps it was waiting for a different kind of resolve.

The camera cuts. The silence says more than either of them did.

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Destruction or Development? When Growth forgets its Purpose

Growth today is no longer questioned – it is assumed, expected, demanded, the single measure by which nations and people are judged.

What is growth, if it leaves the very foundation of life weakened? And what is development, if it costs us our air, our water, our health, and our humanity?

The desire to build, expand, and aspire, has quietly transformed into something else. A need to not only grow, but at a pace faster than one can imagine. And in that urgency, something essential is being lost. We have stopped asking what we are destroying to create this, and who is being left behind in the process. A need to prove, to scale, and to show.

We are not building anymore. We are devouring – our resources, our ecosystems, time, and the very conditions that make future growth possible. A system that cannot sustain itself is not growing in the real sense. It is collapsing in slow motion.

Perhaps the real measure of development is not how much we have the capacity and resources to build, but whether we have the willingness to care for what we build.

When aggression dominates unchecked, growth becomes extraction. Speed replaces wisdom. Expansion overrides preservation. And balance disappears – not dramatically, but gradually, in the innumerable small decisions, each of which seem reasonable and equally important.

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True development was never meant to be one-sided. It is growth with care, expansion with responsibility, and progress with the willingness to ask – what is being sacrificed and whether the sacrifice is worth it.

What we are witnessing today is not progress. It is an imbalance at scale. And imbalance, when left unchecked, always returns – as crisis, as conflict, as collapse.

The world is not lacking development. It is lacking balance in how we define it. And until that changes, we will continue to build a future that cannot hold us.

Chapter 2

Why does the World feel so aggressive today?

"History is a vast early warning system." *Norman Cousins*

And we have been warned. The question is whether we have been listening.

There is a tension in the air today – not always loud, but always present. You can feel it in conversations, in workplaces, in homes and across borders: a restlessness, an urgency, a readiness to react that needs almost no provocation to become conflict.

The same dynamic is playing out in boardrooms, in marriages, in social media comment sections, in the way we talk to strangers in traffic. The scale changes. The quality of the aggression does not.

The question is no longer whether the world is aggressive. The question is: why does it feel like we are all living on the edge?

A world locked in survival

At first glance, the reasons seem familiar – geopolitical rivalry, political instability, weaponization of information, conflict and war. All valid. And yet none of them fully explains the intensity of what we are experiencing, or why it feels so personal, so constant, and so inescapable even in the quietest corners of ordinary life.

Because the real impact of this aggression and unrest is not just external – it is internal: we are living in a world that has unknowingly locked itself into a constant state of survival.

Ancient mechanism in a modern world

Long before modern civilisation, survival depended on two simple choices:

Fight. Or flight.

When faced with danger, our ancestors had to act instantly. The body responded automatically, flooding itself with adrenalin, and energy to either confront the threat or escape it.

Our nervous system was (and still is) constantly scanning, asking one of two questions: *Am I in danger? Or am I safe?*

The fight-or-flight system that answers the first question (am I in danger?) is what science calls the Sympathetic Nervous System – a mode built for action, for responding, solving, defending, controlling, fighting any danger – and what this book calls Masculine Energy.

While the Sympathetic Nervous System prepares us to respond, there is another system – equally powerful, but quieter, and far more ignored – that allows us to restore. It is called the Parasympathetic Nervous System that tells the body: *the danger has passed. You can rest now.* It is the system that makes genuine connection, genuine rest, and genuine reflection possible.

The fight-or-flight response mechanism is essential for everyone as it saves lives. But the problem is that this mode was meant to be a temporary state only to respond to situations, but we never learned when and how to switch it off and put it at rest. This survival mechanism has become our default now – not waiting for an emergency response, but rather becoming a way of living.

The nervous system that does not rest

Today, the danger is no longer a wild animal or an invading enemy.

It is far more subtle, far more prevalent, continuous, and in many ways more difficult to escape precisely because it never fully arrives and never fully passes. It is far more constant 24/7, 365 days.

Emails at 11 p.m. Constant performance metrics. Social media pressure. Financial insecurity. Hyper-competitiveness at work. The silent, continuous competition of simply keeping up. Constant rushing from one task to the next.

We are no longer running from threats. We are living inside them.

And so, the body responds the only way it knows how: By staying alert. All the time. As a result, adrenaline rises. Cortisol remains elevated. Our system is continuously flooded with stress hormones. And slowly, what was meant to be an emergency response, becomes a default state – the only state many of us have known for years.

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Our World in constant Survival mode

The result of a constant flow of masculine energy – of fight-or-flight, is the absence of the complementary feminine energy of rest, connection, reflection, and healing.

This is exactly what is happening in our world – it is operating in constant masculine overdrive, where control, dominance and speed have become the key. And in this overdrive, the essential energy of "slowing down, connection and care" have been suppressed.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced a global pause. For a brief, strange moment, the world slowed. People rediscovered stillness, family ties, cooking, silence, genuine conversation, felt their homes. And then, as soon as the pause lifted, the world did not return to where it had been. It

accelerated past it, as though trying to make up for every moment of the quiet it had been forced to endure. The lesson available in that pause was not taken. The overdrive returned, louder than before.

And the consequences scaled with the size of the system it affected.

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The Question worth exploring

If:

An individual in survival mode becomes reactive.

A relationship in survival mode becomes strained.

A society in survival mode becomes divided.

And a world in survival mode becomes aggressive.

Then aggression is not the cause, but the symptom

So, the real question is not why is the world aggressive.

The real question is whether we can understand what is driving the aggression, and whether, we can find our way back to the other system. The quieter one. The one that makes restoration possible.

The aggression we see in the world today is not inevitable. It is a signal.

A signal that something within us has gone out of balance. But why?

And if, like all imbalances, it can be restored, then how?

The answer to these questions is what this book is attempting to explore.

Chapter 3

The two forces that shape everything

The interesting thing is that the aggression we are seeing in the world today – among nations, in workplaces, in our societies, relationships, and in the particular sharpness of tone and attitude of an ordinary conversation – is not random. It is patterned. And every pattern has a source – in this case the source is a play of two forces.

These forces are invisible, constant, and universal. They exist in nature, in creation, and in every human being. They are not ideas. They are energies.

The Architecture of Existence

What exactly are these energies? And what have they displaced to cause the world to be in constant motion without a pause?

To answer that, we must go beyond systems and society into something more fundamental.

Everything in this universe – from the movement of galaxies to the rhythm of our breath – is governed by two complementary forces: the feminine and the masculine forces.

Different traditions have named them differently, but every civilisation that has spoken about the nature of existence has arrived, independently, at the same duality.

In Hindu philosophy, they are Yoni (feminine) and Linga (masculine) – not merely symbols – they represent the universe's first and most essential conversation: receptivity meeting intention, nature meeting consciousness, the force that sustains meeting the force that initiates.

Yoni represents the female principle, Nature or *Prakriti*, *Shakti* or the universal energy, female reproductive organ, universal womb, Universal Mother, Mother Goddess, and *Parvati*. The *Linga* represents the male principle, *Purusha;* the male sexual organ, consciousness, the Source of creation, and *Shiva*. Together they are not two things. They are one process – the process by which all life becomes possible.

In Taoist philosophy, this same understanding takes the form of Yin and Yang: two essential energies whose interplay generates Qi (*chi*) – the living force that animates everything. Yang is creative, initiating, outward-moving. Yin is receptive, sustaining, inward-moving. Neither precedes the other. Neither can exist without the other. The universe, in this understanding, is not a thing – it is an ongoing conversation between these two energies.

These energies, referred to in various cultures and philosophies, are not opposites. They are partners. They do not compete; they complete.

Life emerges only when both come together in balance, in rhythm, and in flow.

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One Moment. Two Energies.

Before we go further into philosophy, consider something closer to home.

Think of a time you sat with someone you love – not talking, not doing anything in particular, simply present. The quality of that quiet. The way time seemed to move differently. The absence of urgency.

That is Yin energy operating freely – receptive, still, connected, unhurried.

Now think of a deadline. A crisis at work or home. A moment when everything depended on your ability to act, decide, move fast, hold the situation together through sheer force of will. The clarity that arrives. The narrowing of focus. The sense of being entirely, almost effortlessly, capable.

That is Yang energy at its most useful – directed, decisive, powerful, hurried.

Both of these experiences live inside each one of us. The ability to be still and the ability to act. The capacity for connection and the capacity for control. We do not choose one and discard the other – we are born with both, we choose both, and we live with both.

The question this book is asking is: what happens when the world conditions you to live almost entirely in one energy?

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The language of the Yin-Yang energies

Masculine energy does not mean aggression. Masculine Yang energy is an essential force that moves outward. It acts. Builds. Decides. And leads. It is structured, directional, and focused. It's the energy that takes a vision and turns it into form.

Similarly, feminine energy does not mean weakness. Feminine Yin energy is the other essential force that moves inward. It receives. Feels. Nurtures. And sustains. It is intuitive, fluid, and expansive in a different way. It's the energy that holds what Yang has built and makes it habitable.

Neither is superior. Neither is complete on its own. They need each other for the balance to exist, and for life to endure.

We humans have been conditioned to think in binaries. Black or white. Strong or soft. Leader or nurturer. Rational or emotional. But life does not work in extremes. It works in integration.

We are not one or the other energy. We are both. Every human being carries both energies. Not as potential, but as a Universal reality. Not as something to develop, but as something already present, waiting to be allowed.

Energy does not follow gender. It follows expression, and our choice.

We often misunderstand energies and mix them up with genders.

However, when we observe around us, there are men who are deeply sensitive, intuitive, and emotionally present. Similarly, there are women who are highly driven, assertive, and action-oriented. And there are many who move fluidly between both. What shapes us is not our gender, but rather it is which energy we have learned, over time, to inhabit. And more often than not, we have not chosen it – it has been chosen for us, by the world we grew up in.

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What is Balance

Simply explained, balance is making a conscious and aware move: from reaction to choice; from habit to consciousness; and from a restricted identity to a fuller range of being.

When one is balanced, action becomes purposeful. Strength becomes grounded. Growth becomes sustainable. There is clarity, without control. There is empathy, without weakness.

People do not feel threatened by each other. Instead they collaborate, and create together. They respect differences. As a result, when in balance, life feels aligned, purposeful, grounded and at ease.

When energies move in harmony, life exists in harmony.

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What is Imbalance

Imbalance does not mean one energy disappears. It means one energy becomes dominant, while the other goes silent – dormant, unexpressed – but never gone.

Over time, the dominant energy begins to define us – our reactions, our decisions, our relationships, our entire way of being in the world.

When masculine energy operates unabated, without its counterpart, the distortion is precise and predictable. Strength turns into rigidity. Leadership turns into control. Protection turns into dominance. And what was once constructive becomes destructive – not because the intention has changed, but because the balance has disappeared.

If we step back and look at the world, through patterns, a deeper truth will begin to emerge. We are not just living in an aggressive world. But we are living in a world that has tilted – too far, and too long – in one direction – a world which is in a masculine overdrive.

This overdrive is not about more men in the world. It is about heightened masculine energies.

The masculine energy that existed to initiate, protect, and build is now running without pause, without restoration, and without its Yin counterpart, that would allow it to know when enough is enough. In the constant push for more – more growth, more power, more speed, more output – the world has systematically left behind the qualities that nurture, care, and empathise.

Ancient India spoke of something similar through, more than 3,000 years old, Vedic concept of *Rta* (*Rita*): the principle of cosmic order and harmony. It suggests that harmony was never about equal weight on both sides of a scale. It says:

Every force in the cosmic Universe has a rightful place, function, measure and relationship.

Imbalance begins when a force abandons its sustaining purpose and expands beyond its rightful limits.

Seen this way, masculine energy isn't a villain, neither does feminine energy get a free pass. The trouble starts when they overrun their limits and expand outside their role and calcify into one-sided roles and lose the conscious relationship that was supposed to hold them together.

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Balance and Imbalance | The 4-burner stove explanation

Think of your life as a four-burner stove.

One burner is Work and Money.

The second is Family and Friends.

The third is Connection – to yourself, to others, to spirituality, and to something beyond achievement.

The fourth is Health.

All four burners draw from the same cylinder: your finite supply of time and energy.

A Yang-driven life often turns the Work and Money burner to full flame. More hours. More ambition. More achievement. More urgency. But the cylinder has not become larger simply because one burner demands more fuel.

So something else begins to receive less.

Usually Family and Friends is the first flame to lower – conversations become shorter, presence becomes distracted, relationships are postponed for "when things settle down." Slowly, Connection suffers too. There is less time for reflection, stillness, joy or simply being. And eventually Health begins to pay the price of an engine that has been running too hard for too long. This is the imbalance.

The answer is not to turn the Work burner off.

It is to stop allowing one flame to consume the fuel meant for the whole stove.

Balance asks us to look at all four burners consciously and ask: Which one have I been feeding at the expense of the others? Which flame now needs more of my time and energy?

For a Yin-dominant person, the imbalance can look very different.

The Family and Friends burner is turned to full flame – caring, giving, adjusting, listening, supporting, keeping everyone comfortable. Their time and energy are continuously poured into other people.

But the cylinder is still finite on time and energy.

So the other burners begin to weaken. Work and Money may be neglected because personal ambition feels less important than someone else's needs. Health gets postponed because there is always somebody else to care for first. And perhaps most importantly, Connection to Self begins to fade.

Their own desires become harder to name. Their preferences become secondary. They stop asking, What do I want? and become accustomed to asking, What does everyone else need from me?

Over time, giving can quietly turn into self-erasure. When a person's value becomes tied mainly to how useful, available or needed they are by others, their sense of self-worth can begin to depend on other people's approval.

The answer is not to turn off the Family and Friends burner.

It is to remember that you are one of the people your time and energy must also nourish.

Balance asks: Have I been keeping everyone else's flame alive while allowing my own to go out?

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The Interpretation that amplified everything

One of the most powerful misunderstandings of our time did not come from intention. It came from interpretation.

In trying to correct the deep imbalance of patriarchal systems in which men led and women followed, and the entire architecture of power that was built around masculine energy, we focused on equality of roles. We counted women in boardrooms and measured representation in parliaments.

But in doing so, we overlooked something deeper: equality of energies – the importance and contribution of feminine attributes, qualities and their impact – rather than equality of gender and roles.

As a result, masculine energy is no longer confined to men now. It has become the dominant language of success for everyone, and most acutely for women.

The movement toward gender equality was necessary. Unambiguously, historically necessary. But somewhere in its translation, equality began to mean sameness. Sameness in behaviour, in leadership style, in approach and attitude.

Women entering professional spaces were not just given opportunities. They were given a template.

A template already shaped by masculine energy: speed, aggression, competition, emotional detachment. And to succeed within it, they were expected to adapt – not by expanding the definition of leadership, and by bringing in their inherent feminine qualities, but by fitting into the (masculine) one that already existed.

To rise, many women learned to activate what the system rewarded: to speak louder, push harder, feel less, become more forceful. More like the existing system itself.

While this shift created real progress, it created a further paradox – in trying to correct one imbalance, we unknowingly strengthened another – feminine qualities like empathy, intuition, sensitivity, the capacity to nurture and sustain, were slowly pushed aside, even by women. Not because they lacked value, but because they lacked visibility, and immediate impact.

As a result, the world did not become more balanced. It became more uniformly imbalanced – more driven, more competitive, more in overdrive – with the expectation now extended to everyone regardless of gender.

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Instead of restoring what was missing, we have amplified what was already excessive. And the consequences are now visible everywhere - as stress, burnout, conflict, and a pervasive emotional disconnection that touches workplaces, homes, relationships, and the interior of individual lives – in both men and women.

We have reduced the masculine and feminine to stereotypes of male and female gender types, strong and weak, achiever and nurturer. But in their true form, they are far more profound.

Balance was never about equal participation.
It was about equal presence of energies.

Until we move beyond equality of roles into awareness of energies, we will continue to push everyone toward the same way of being - a way that may look powerful and equal on the outside, but slowly disconnects us from who we are within.

An interview for Gender Equality | Scene from a corporate interview

A large organisation has launched a prominent Women in Leadership initiative. The goal: to increase female representation in senior roles. The interview panel consists of three people - the HR Head, the Business Head, and the Strategy Lead. The candidate is Rhea, a mid-career professional known for building high-retention teams, navigating complex stakeholder environments, and leading with empathy and long-term thinking.

HR Head: "Rhea, we are actively looking for strong women leaders. Tell us – are you a go-getter?"

Rhea: "Yes, I am a go-getter. I'm someone who gets things done – not at the cost of people or sustainability – but with their trust at my side. I focus on aligning teams, understanding concerns, and then driving outcomes collectively, strongly and purposefully."

The panel nods politely, but quickly moves on

Business Head: "Leadership today requires aggression, speed, and tough decision-making. How aggressive are you when it comes to meeting targets?"

Rhea: "I believe decisiveness and aggression are both important in leadership, but should be handled in an empathic way. Relentless aggression often creates fear-based performance. I focus on clarity, accountability, and psychological safety – those drive consistent results over time."

Business Head: *Slightly impatient.* "But when things go wrong, do you push hard? Do you pressure your team to perform and achieve?"

Rhea: "I step in firmly when required. I give guidance, and lead by example because I don't believe pressure alone creates excellence. It often creates burnout."

(Silence. Notes are taken, but the energy in the room shifts.)

Strategy Lead: "How competitive are you? We operate in a high-performance environment."

Rhea: "I'm competitive with standards and systems. I do not believe in competing with people in the same company. I believe collaboration strengthens systems more than internal rivalry."

Strategy Lead: "Hmm. We're really looking for women who can stand shoulder-to-shoulder with men, with the same drive, same intensity."

HR Head: "So how do you prove yourself in a room full of strong men?"

Rhea: "By bringing what's missing into the room – perspective, emotional intelligence, long-term thinking, and balance. Strength doesn't have to look the same to be effective."

(This answer is not written down)

Business Head: "If selected, how will you add value to our system?"

Rhea: "By creating teams that don't just perform, but stay. By reducing attrition, increasing trust, and ensuring growth doesn't come at the cost of people's mental health. Systems thrive when they are balanced, not just driven."

Strategy Lead: *Smiling politely.* "Thank you, Rhea. We're specifically looking for women who can be more… forceful. Someone who can be part of our senior team of assertive leaders."

The interview lasted forty-five minutes.

Rhea was not selected. The role went to a candidate that the panel described, in their debrief, as "more aligned with our culture." What they meant, though no one said it, was more familiar. More like what the room already contained.

The organization said it wanted more women. And it did. It wanted representation, and diversity, but without difference. The organisation met its women-in-leadership target that quarter. The numbers, when published, looked like progress.

Rhea went on to build one of the highest-retention teams in her industry at a company that asked her a different question: *not how aggressive are you, but what do you see that we are missing*?

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What comes next

Understanding these two forces will not immediately solve anything. But it will certainly give perspective and show the path.

Once you recognise the pattern – once you can identify, in a conversation, in a meeting, in a news report, in your own chest, the difference between energy that is balanced and energy that has gone too far in one direction – you will not be able to unsee it. And once you see it, you will be able to address it.

That is where this book goes next: into the places where the imbalance lives. In the patterns that shaped you before you had a language for them. In the relationships where it plays out most intimately. In the body that has been absorbing, quietly and for a long time, everything the mind refused to feel.

The two forces are not a theory. They are the architecture of every experience you have ever had.

In the next chapter, we go deeper into how these energies shape our relationships, our choices, our conflicts, and our sense of self and belonging.

Chapter 4

The hidden origins of Imbalance

The question deepens: Where does this imbalance begin?

No one arrives at imbalance all at once. Neither does it announce itself as a crisis. It begins as something quieter: a mood that lingers, a relationship that gradually loses warmth, a workplace that starts rewarding a particular set of attitudes.

Imbalance begins much earlier than we think – mostly unconsciously or sub-consciously. Not in governments, not in policies, not in the systems. It begins in the smallest places. In the things we were told, and in the things we were never told. In the spaces between what was felt and what was allowed to be expressed.

It begins much earlier, and much closer.

Within us.

The Imbalance we don't see | Fear

Most of us live with an imbalance. Not because we chose it, but because we were shaped into it – much before we had the language to recognise what was happening, or the standing to resist it.

We feel its effects every day. The stress we cannot explain, the exhaustion that does not lift, the tendency to overreact or the inability to assert ourselves, the patterns that repeat, despite our best intentions – these are not personality flaws.

They are instructions – absorbed early, practised often, and mistaken, in time, for our character. They are the surface evidence of an energetic imbalance that quietly shapes how we think, feel, and respond to everything.

And by the time we notice it, the imbalance has become so familiar that it feels like our personality. Like who we are, rather than what we learned, absorbed or adapted to.

Imbalance does not wear one face. Fear teaches it to wear many. In order to feel safe in situations one person may prefer disappearing behind endless giving – loving, tending, caring, never once asking for anything back in return – *an imbalance of feminine energy*. Another may learn to be safe by dominating, and taking charge of everything – deciding, directing, controlling everyone, including themselves – *imbalance of masculine energy*. One protects the self by yielding. The other protects it by gripping tighter. Both survive the same fear, but from opposite ends. Both letting a part of the self go missing.

More often than not, under pressure, and fear, we reach out for whichever energy once protected us. If in our past experience, speaking invited punishment, we become quiet. If dependence led to disappointment, we become fiercely self-reliant. If uncertainty felt dangerous, we tighten our grip. From the outside, the pattern looks like temperament, and nature. But inside, it works as defence, and protection.

Yin without Yang can become self-erasure. Yang without Yin can become isolation. Different expressions. But the same survival instinct.

Over time, through repeated instances, this defence stops looking like defence at all, and calcifies into roles. They become that person's reality, nature, and personality – the accommodator, the controller, the peacemaker, the fixer – each one unaware that somewhere behind the role stands the version of themselves unexplored and suppressed under the protection of the role. For example – the one who became quiet becomes "the one who won't say no" – the one everyone can lean on anytime – taken for granted most times, and never burdening anyone with a need of her own.

Then the one who gripped tighter becomes “the strong one” – the one who has everything handled, who steps in every time to take control, and who is not emotional or sensitive. People get defined by the roles they hide behind, without knowing their true self.

Both are praised by those around. But both are, quietly, alone – because a role, however admired, is not the same as being known. What begins as a way to survive a moment becomes, unnoticed, a way to live a life. And anything outside this becomes a challenge for them, no matter how much they want to come out of that role.

We become imbalanced when we unconsciously repeat one mode of responding until it begins to feel like our nature.

Imbalance often begins before people have the language or power to recognise it. Reactions learned through fear, correction, rejection, responsibility, performance or suppression are practised repeatedly until they are mistaken for personality.

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The fear of being Judged | Not the best at public speaking

Vikram's father was a man who corrected before he praised.

Grammar at the dinner table. Posture in family photographs. Opinions in front of guests, adjusted mid-sentence, in front of everyone. Nothing was said with obvious cruelty. It was simply said, every time, as if Vikram's first attempt at anything — a sentence, an idea, an answer — was a draft awaiting his father's red pen before it could be allowed to stand.

Father: "That's not how you explain it. Say it properly, or don't say it."

The correction itself Vikram could have carried. But what was not easily carried was what came with it – a careless laugh at something Vikram had said wrong, or said too eagerly, or said with a confidence that turned out, in his father's eyes, to be unearned. The laugh cost his father nothing. He rarely even remembered it afterward. But it landed on Vikram in a way the correction alone never had, because a correction says *this is wrong*. A laugh, for him meant, *you are*.

His father, in his own way, wanted the best for him – wanted him to be sharp, ready for a world he believed only rewarded certainty. But Vikram could not easily tell the difference between being corrected toward confidence and being corrected out of it. Vikram absorbed the second. Every unmet expectation felt less like a standard to rise to and more like a verdict already delivered on who he was, and of being judged.

So Vikram learned to say things properly. Which, for a boy already careful, meant saying less.

Writing became the one place his father's voice could not reach him in time. On paper, he could draft, cross out, begin again, and hand over only the version he had already approved of himself. Nobody saw the sentence that failed. On paper, he was certain, and no one was laughing.

But the same door that let him speak freely in writing closed a little further, each year, on his speaking voice. He participated less in his school – always thinking and correcting himself before taking the chance to talk. He was intelligent but not someone who could carry his intelligence.

By the time he reached university, the pattern had a name, though no one around him used it. He was "not the confident one." In seminars, he composed, silently, arguments sharper than the ones being spoken around him – and let them dissolve, unsaid, rather than risk them landing wrong in the open air of a room. He wrote essays professors singled out for their clarity. He sat through class discussions on those same essays without once raising his hand.

Years later, at a work conference, a colleague pulled him aside during a break.

Colleague: *Warmly, meaning it as a compliment*. "Your report was the best in the department. Why didn't you present it yourself? You'd have owned that room."

Vikram: *A small, practiced smile*. "I'm better on paper. Public speaking isn't really my thing."

Colleague: "You should push yourself. People would want to hear it from you."

Vikram: "Maybe next time."

That evening, alone in his hotel room, he opened his laptop and wrote, effortlessly, everything he had not been able to say out loud that day – clear, confident, unhesitating. He read it back once, satisfied. Then he closed the file, and did not speak about it to anyone.

What looks like shyness is often a highly specific fear: not a fear of people, but a fear of being witnessed and judged.

A man shaped this way does not lack things to say. He lacks trust that saying them, out loud, in real time, will be met with anything other than comments he still, somewhere, has not stopped hearing.

The Misunderstanding that changed everything

Somewhere along the way, we misunderstood a fundamental truth about a very old phrase – Survival of the fittest, by Herbert Spencer, and Charles Darwin.

"Survival of the fittest" was never meant to glorify aggression. Darwin's original insight was about adaptability, and natural selection – the capacity to adjust, to bend without breaking, to evolve without destroying. This capacity to absorb pressure, transform under it, and emerge without losing essential qualities is one of the oldest expressions of feminine intelligence.

But over time, the idea was distorted. Survival came to be equated with strength, aggression, and competition. And so we began to harden: to outpace, to outperform, to compete even when it meant losing parts of ourselves that were not dispensable - expressions of a masculine overdrive.

Women were offered roles next to men, but instead of complementing their attributes, women were also forced to compete to survive in the same system, with the same set of energies and outlook.

We confused endurance with excellence. We confused silence with strength. And we glorified competition, struggle and aggression, in order to be able to “be fit to survive in the world”.

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The Weight of performance | An evening in office

Arnold, the CEO of a large multi-national company, leaned back in his leather chair, rubbing his temples as he stared at the quarterly reports. The numbers weren't bad, but they weren't great either.

Across the table sat Maya, his most competent employee. She had always been sharp, efficient, and relentless in meeting targets.

Arnold: In a firm voice. "You need to be more aggressive with the clients, Maya. We're losing ground. You're too soft with negotiations."

Maya: *Exhales, biting back her frustration*. "Arnold, being firm doesn't mean being aggressive. I have built long-term relationships, and our clients trust us. If we keep pushing without listening, we'll lose them."

Arnold: *Leans forward, dismissive*. "That's the problem with being too emotional. Business isn't about only trust, being emotional and soft. It's about dominance, and being a go-getter."

Maya: *Feeling something tighten in her chest.*

She had spent years adapting to this cutthroat world, pushing aside her natural empathy, speaking louder to be heard, and acting tougher to be respected. She had once believed that hard work was enough, but she had learned the hard way that if she wasn't aggressive, she would be invisible.

After a long pause, she nodded. Not in agreement. But in surrender. "Fine," she said coldly. "I'll push harder."

Arnold: Nodded, satisfied. The conversation was over. The message was conveyed, and targets would be met.

But as Maya walked out, something lingered. Not in the numbers. But in her.

There was no warmth left. No spark. No excitement. The aliveness with which she had once approached her work had gone quiet, with no announcement and no farewell. She had agreed to become what the system demanded, with something essential inside her going quiet.

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Later that night, Arnold sat alone, staring at his reflection in the darkened office window.

And for a brief moment, he saw something he had spent years avoiding.

How many people like Maya had he shaped this way? High performance was no longer about excellence. It was about speed, output, endurance, and dominance, at any cost and without any ceiling. And the cost is one that never appears on a balance sheet: the slow erosion of the person doing the performing.

Empathy has been replaced by efficiency, collaboration by competition, presence by pressure, until the person beneath the performance has become unrecognisable, even to themselves.

And slowly, performance becomes extraction – not just of effort, but of identity itself.

How is Imbalance created?

No one is born imbalanced. We are conditioned into it – through our upbringing, our environment, society, workplace. Through expectations. Slowly. Subtly. Repeatedly. Through what we are told, what we experience, and what we see, hear and do.

1. Memories stored in subconscious mind

A child who is told, "Don't be emotional," learns to suppress softness.

A child who is told, "Adjust and stay quiet," learns to suppress strength.

A child who faces abuse, learns either to be extremely submissive or extremely aggressive.

A child who witnesses struggles, parents fight, broken families, learns to hold relationships at a distance, never fully trusting what can be taken away.

Over time, one energy grows stronger. The other fades into the background - not gone, just unused, and dormant.

And what is unused, begins to feel unnatural. Eventually feeling as if it never existed, and shapes our lives based on just one energy.

Through the beliefs that become so deeply absorbed they stop feeling like beliefs and start feeling like facts: this is who I am, this is how things are, that there is no other way to be.

Children learn early: To compete. To prove. To win. And in doing so, they disconnect early from their natural rhythm.

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The Weight of Suppression and Change | A woman's dialogue with self & within

She became everything the world told her to be – until she could not remember who she really was.

Anaya Mehta did not grow up believing that softness had a place in strength.

Raised by a father who believed emotions were a weakness, in her home, emotions were not encouraged – they were controlled. For them resilience meant silence, and strength meant never breaking.

As the eldest daughter in a middle-class family, Anaya understood early what was expected of her. Be responsible. Be practical. Be strong.

Then life shifted. Her father lost his job, and she watched her mother change. A woman who once moved gently through life, became someone else. Tireless, relentless, silent. She worked, endured, and adjusted. And she never complained.

That image stayed with Anaya. Not as inspiration. But as instruction.

Softness is a luxury. Strength is survival.

And so, she adapted herself too – into a world that quietly rewards women for toughness, and subtly punishes them for vulnerability. She learned to sharpen herself, and make herself stronger and ambitious. She studied harder, worked longer, and spoke stronger. She built a career as a corporate strategist, and she excelled. She outperformed. Outlasted. Outworked. And in doing so, she did not feel.

Years later, a work relocation brought her back to her childhood town – a place she had left behind in pursuit of something larger. She arrived expecting nothing. What she found was something she had not realised she had lost.

While walking back through streets, she passed an art supply shop. She stood outside it for longer than she could explain. She saw a child painting – absorbed, unhurried, entirely present.

Anaya stood there until the light changed.

She had not painted in fourteen years. That version of herself – the girl who had once painted, who wrote poetry, who dreamed not of achievement but of expression – had been so thoroughly replaced that she had almost ceased to remember her.

It was there that she met an old friend who had chosen a different path: a life defined not only by titles but by connection also, by presence, by the quality of her relationships that she has still maintained. They spoke for a long time. And for the first time in years, Anaya found herself questioning something she had never doubted before.

Was it possible to succeed differently? Not by abandoning ambition, but by expanding its definition?

She decided to choose a different path for herself – not only of ambition, but of awareness as well. She returned to painting along-side her job – not as therapy, but as a practice of paying attention to something other than output. She allowed stillness. She tended to the relationships she had neglected. She let herself be, without requiring herself to perform.

She did not abandon her strength. She expanded it. And when she rose, eventually, to lead her organisation, she carried that expansion with her. Performance was no longer defined by aggression for her. Strength was no longer measured by control, but by the ability to hold both clarity and compassion simultaneously.

She did not just change her life. She changed the system she once believed she had no choice but to survive.

What feels like personality may sometimes be an instruction absorbed early, practised repeatedly and eventually mistaken for the self.

What emerges when both energies are present is not just success. It is wholeness - something the world's current definition of performance cannot measure, and therefore cannot value.

2. Life's contribution to experiences

As we grow, life adds its own layers, and this imbalance is reinforced. Through education that rewards competition and comparison above curiosity. Through families, and societies that embed a precise map of what is an "acceptable behaviour", what is acceptable to feel and what must be hidden. What is rewarded and what is punished. What is seen as strength and what is weakness.

Moments of pressure, loss, fear, and responsibility that press us further into the patterns we have already learned. Some of us harden becoming controlling, self-reliant, closed. Others withdraw becoming passive, accommodating, self-erasing.

At first, these are simply survival responses. But over time, they harden further into one's identity, forgetting anything else ever existed.

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The Weight of Responsibility | The daughter who performed

Sara's father was a man who loved his family – his wife and Sara. He wanted to give them the best life could offer. He promised his wife "Once Sara settles, we will travel. I will finally give you the life you deserve."

Sara was twenty-one when her father died, and until then, the future had always been spoken of as something waiting for her, not something she would have to build with her own hands.

At the funeral, relatives told Sara to be strong for her mother. It was meant as comfort.

She received it as an instruction – not as a feeling to sit with, but as a mission. Someone had to finish what her father had started. She took it upon herself as her dream in life – to be so successful in her career that she could give all the comforts that her father had promised her mother. She wanted to take care of her mother more than anything else in the world.

Every promotion became proof that she was protecting them. Every sacrifice, a payment against a debt no one had actually asked her to repay.

When the man she loved asked her to marry him, she passed it as a love story to be followed in the next lifetime.

There was no dramatic ending. No betrayal, no great conflict to point to afterward and call the reason. She simply kept postponing herself, quietly, reasonably, until the relationship could no longer survive being placed second to a responsibility with no end date attached to it.

Years later, Sara was a successful corporate woman, and she had given her mother almost everything her father once dreamed of giving her – comfort, security, travel, a home with good light in it.

Her mother looked at her one evening, across a kitchen that had cost Sara a decade to afford, and said, "Your father wanted all this for us. But he also wanted a life for you."

Sara smiled, because by then responsibility was no longer something she carried. It had become who she was. Her Yin had already been suppressed. She had learned to feel valuable only when she was providing, solving, or sacrificing – wanting something for herself had started to feel selfish, rest had started to feel irresponsible, and love, whenever it came near her again, felt like a distraction from a promise she had made silently to herself, that no one had ever asked her to make.

What looks like ambition is not always the pursuit of a dream. Sometimes it is grief, dressed carefully, and sent out to work.

People shaped this way do not sacrifice love because they are incapable of receiving it. They sacrifice love, emotions and sensitivity, because responsibility has convinced them that choosing their own life would mean abandoning someone else's. They carry the debts of the person they have lost and quietly turn them into obligations that they think only they can complete. And in trying to give they give away, piece by piece, without ever quite noticing the moment it happens, the life that could have been their own – even without that sacrifice.

Responsibilities, and ambition can go hand in hand with love for own self – it does not need to be a sacrifice of one for the other.

3. Modern world's impact

With life, comes the modern world that amplifies the imbalance even more.

Constant stimulation, and endless competition.

Workplaces that treat availability as virtue and rest as weakness - that glorify speed, aggression, and visibility.

Social media that places every life, every career, body, relationship, and achievement, in a permanent, real-time display designed to produce the sensation of falling behind. A mode that is always on, always performing, always asking for more, and never asking what it's costing.

A race that never seems to end. A life lived in comparison. Constant stimulation, notifications, screens, and information. Constant consuming. Responding. Scrolling. Reacting.

Illusions of urgency. Late night emails. Fire fighting. 24x7 availability.

Performance, speed, aggression, and competition become the water we swim in, until we lose our original identity, and forget there was ever a different element, or that we were once capable of breathing differently.

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This is all where imbalance originates. Not in some distant political system or abstract cultural force, but here – in such situations, closer to home, societies and workplaces.

It begins in the moments we are shaped before we know we are being shaped; and in the personalities we assume by taking on roles that were first taken only to keep us safe.

But here is what matters: because imbalance is learned, it can be unlearned. Because it is conditioned, it can be reconditioned. Because it is a pattern, it can be seen. And what can be seen can, with time and intention, be changed.

That process begins not with the world, but with the individual. Not with the system, but with the person inside it who becomes willing to ask: which parts of myself did I agree to leave behind – and is it time to go back for them?

The next chapter begins to answer that question.

Chapter 5

The invisible impact of imbalance

Energy, when blocked, does not disappear.

It distorts. Transforms into energy of another type. This is the Universal truth that is easy to miss, but it is present and has its impact.

Imbalance is cumulative. What begins within an individual does not stay there. It slowly expands outward – into families and relationships that person inhabits, into the organisations they build and join, into the societies that form around the accumulated choices of millions of people each navigating their own private distortion, and eventually into the world.

Individuals begin to break. Families begin to fragment. Institutions become toxic. Societies drift toward conflict. And the World starts to engage in wars.

The suffering we see today is not random. It is not accidental.

Imbalance within individuals becomes imbalance in the world.

This chapter traces that movement. From the inside to out.

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What it costs the Self

At an individual level, imbalance arrives quietly. It is not a sudden breakdown. It builds slowly – as inner unrest, confusion, helplessness, persistent and inexplicable sense that something is not working despite every reasonable effort being made.

The words we reach for, most often, are stress, anxiety, lifestyle-issue. And then we dismiss those words because externally everything appears to be functioning normally – we are working, managing, showing up, enjoying, earning, spending. So where is this stress coming from?

It comes from living too long in any one mode – any one energy.

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When Yang gets overstimulated in Self

When Yang energy is chronically overstimulated – through constant urgency, relentless competition, the pressure to perform without pause – the body remains locked in a state of survival. The body loses its ability to recover and restore itself. The system that heals and replenishes shuts down when it feels that this threat of survival is continuous and not lifting.

Over time, the stuck energy accumulates in ways that feel unrelated and the body starts showing signs: as restlessness that does not settle, as sleep that does not restore, fatigue that does not leave, irritability that seems disproportionate to its triggers, as emotional numbness that creeps in through the body, as a feeling of disconnectedness, and as an over-thinking, continuously running mind.

This is not a personality flaw, or only about deficiencies in the body. This is not just stress. This is absence of restoration.

It is the physiological cost of a nervous system that has been running in a constant mode for so long that "motion" has become its default. This body doesn't know how to pause, how to become still, how to not do anything.

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When Yin dominates the Self

When Yin energy dominates without its counterpart, the distortion is different but equally costly. Boundaries dissolve before they are formed. Sensitivity exists but has no structure to hold it. Fear disguises itself as patience, avoidance masquerades as peace, and silence begins to look like acceptance when it is, in truth, paralysis. There is stagnation, indecision, and withdrawal. Decisions are postponed. Opportunities are overthought into inaction.

Life slows, then stalls – not from lack of intelligence or capability, but from the absence of the directional, initiating energy that turns reflection into movement, and constant thinking into action, and achievement.

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In both cases, the result is the same: we fragment. Either always moving without ever stopping, or always waiting without ever beginning. And in that fragmentation, we lose not only our competence, and not only our capacity, but our wholeness. Our identity, our purpose and our being.

Yin and Yang were never meant to oppose each other. They were always meant to move together. To balance, to complement, and to sustain – together as one whole.

But when one energy dominates, or the other is suppressed, its impact is deeply felt.

What it costs Relationships

Relationships are where imbalance becomes visible fastest because a relationship is not a solo performance. It is an intersection. Two people bring their patterns into the same space, and those patterns interact, amplify, and collide in ways that neither partner would have anticipated when they first chose each other.

A healthy relationship requires a dynamic exchange: the initiating, structuring, directive quality of Yang moving alongside the receiving, nurturing, emotionally attuned quality of Yin. Not, one person embodying each energy – but instead both people capable of accessing both, and moving between them as the moment requires.

But when this fluidity and dynamism disappears, the flow breaks.

Friction replaces flow – one person leads all the time; the other adjusts all the time. One person feels everything; the other manages everything. What begins as complementarity hardens into roles, and roles eventually become resentments.

With friction in a relationship, competition replaces collaboration. Ego replaces understanding. Silence or domination replaces dialogue. And two people who once chose each other with genuine love find

themselves standing on opposite sides of something neither can fully name.

They call it incompatibility. They call it growing apart. They blame the behaviour, the circumstances, the other person's specific failures.

Rarely do they see what is actually happening: that they are living out an energetic pattern, that neither was taught to recognise, and neither knows how to interrupt.

What it costs Organisations

The modern workplace is perhaps the most concentrated expression of Yang overdrive that exists today. It has been built, almost entirely, on one set of values: speed, competition, growth, output, and the performance of strength. And for a long time, these values produced results that confirmed themselves in terms of high productivity, exceeded targets, expanded markets – what we call stupendous results.

However, what these results do not measure is what was being depleted in order to produce them.

In organisations where only Yang is rewarded, people adapt in order to survive and to excel. They learn to perform with aggression, to speak with assertion rather than consideration, to prioritise speed over reflection.

Empathy, collaboration, ability to listen before deciding, capacity to hold complexity without resolving it prematurely – these qualities are suppressed because they do not look like leadership qualities which produce results in the short term. They are the qualities that sustain organisations through difficulty. But in a Yang-dominated culture, they

do not fit the visible definition of success, and are invisible at best and punished at worst.

And so, people adapt. Not just men, but women as well.

The consequences are visible across every layer and all genders: burnout has gotten normalised, leadership mistakes control for authority, high attrition rates are treated as a cost of doing business. Creativity gets eroded, collaboration weakens, and trust fails to exist as it cannot grow in an environment structured around competition.

Organisations that suppress balance do not collapse dramatically. They decline incrementally, losing the things that made them worth building in the first place - the people, the ideas, and the sense of shared purpose.

What it costs the World

What begins within individuals does not stay within individuals. It scales outwards to the world around them.

The decisions made by imbalanced individuals become the policies of imbalanced institutions. The values rewarded in imbalanced organisations become the values of imbalanced cultures. And the cultures of nations – their foreign policies, their environmental choices, their definitions of progress and success – they reflect the accumulated energetic pattern of the people and systems that compose them.

When feminine energies like empathy, collaboration, long-term thinking, care, are systematically suppressed at every level of society, the decisions that follow carry the cost of their absence. Decisions get increasingly driven by: energies of power, control, and dominance.

But power without wisdom produces wars that achieve positioning rather than peace. Competition without cooperation produces economies that grow while the ecosystems sustaining them collapse underneath.

The pursuit of dominance without the restraint of care produces a world where prosperity and suffering exist side by side, where progress and destruction move in the same direction, where each generation inherits a version of the crisis the last one chose not to address because addressing it would have required slowing down.

The result is devastating – internal wars, territorial wars, wars over resources, power and greed, violence, social injustice, conflicts without resolution, exploitation of people and resources, pollution, global warming, and environmental destruction.

This is not abstraction. It is the world we currently inhabit. And it did not arrive as a sudden catastrophe. It accumulated, quietly, through the same mechanism by which all imbalance accumulates: one suppressed quality at a time, one unchallenged pattern at a time, one generation of unreflective urgency at a time.

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When balance is lost, even success begins to carry a cost.

The question this book is working towards is not whether the imbalance is real, but rather - whether it can be interrupted.

But before we can answer that, we need to see the patterns more clearly. In the people we recognise. In the relationships we inhabit. And most importantly, in our own selves.

That is what the next two chapters are for.

Chapter 6

What are Imbalanced Personalities?

Before imbalance becomes conflict in a relationship, pressure in a workplace, or aggression in the world, it shows up quietly as personality.

As behaviour. As patterns. As the particular shape of how a person moves through the world and responds to what they find there.

Some of us become overly accommodating – agreeing, adjusting, absorbing – until accommodation becomes our identity. Such people know how to love without asking for anything back: they give without thinking, tend to others' feelings before their own, and notice the smallest hurt in another's voice. But what they don't know is how to be loved in return. Receiving makes them uneasy, almost guilty, and before the moment has even settled they are already calculating how to return the favour, the love, or even the compliment they have received. Being needed feels safer to them than being loved, because being needed gives them an exact role to follow – they know exactly who they are: useful, capable, and the one with something to give – their roles become their armour, their protection. On the other hand, receiving makes them feel far more vulnerable with nothing to do – no fixed role to play, no debt to repay, nothing to perform.

There are others who become excessively controlling – deciding, directing, managing – until control has replaced connection. Somewhere along the way, perhaps, they learn that receiving creates a debt, that love can disappear anytime, that emotions and dependence on someone is dangerous. So they became independent instead: capable, strong, the one who says "I've got it" even when they don't have it all under control. Their strength may earn admiration, but it leaves little room for softness. Over time, beneath the competence there often surfaces a quieter

longing: What would it feel like not to perform strength all the time? How would it feel to be uncertain, sensitive, and cared for? Control is not always confidence. Most of the times, it is fear that has learned to look powerful and defend oneself from any eventuality that may hurt them. Being strong, for them, is how they protect themselves.

Then there are those who avoid conflict at any cost. And there are others who generate it, almost reflexively, as the only language through which they know how to assert that they exist.

Different patterns. But the same protective impulse.

At first, these feel like traits. Character. "Just how I am." But beneath them, they are expressions of an energy that has grown dominant while its counterpart has gone quiet – accumulated over years of conditioning, reinforced by environments that rewarded one way of being and punished the other.

Too much Yin, and we lose our voice. Too much Yang, and we lose our connection. And most of us do not notice the imbalance because when a pattern has been repeated long enough, it stops feeling like a pattern. It feels like reality – like our own nature. We keep our guard up to protect ourselves, and in doing so, we forget that love, attention, and care are still there for us – waiting quietly behind a door we ourselves closed, long ago. That door is the one we now need to open and walk through: toward rest, toward pause, toward letting ourselves receive what others have been wanting to give all along.

The two cases that follow are not exceptional. They are reflections of patterns that exist in varying intensities across almost every person alive – including in some form, the person reading this. At first, these feel like traits. But beneath them, they are simply expressions of energy imbalance.

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Case 1 | More Yin less Yang | Sensitivity becomes a silent Struggle

Aran was the easiest person in any room to be around.

He listened. He adjusted. He remembered the things people mentioned in passing and followed up on them weeks later. His colleagues trusted him with things they did not share with anyone else. His managers relied on him to hold the team together. Always polite, dependable, and always available.

He was sensitive, avoided confrontation, and felt deeply for everyone. Harsh comments stayed with him for days, and disapproval lingered longer. But he never expressed.

At thirty-six years, he had been in the same organisation for over eight years. He worked hard and delivered consistently. Everyone, genuinely, valued him.

And yet nothing moved. Promotions passed to others. Projects with visibility were assigned to colleagues less experienced but more assertive. Opportunities arrived and quietly left, without ever seeming to land on him.

He told himself to be patient. That the right people would notice eventually. That good work speaks for itself.

But slowly, beneath the patience, something else was building. A frustration he could not express because expressing felt like a betrayal and disapproval to him. A loneliness, despite being surrounded by people who claimed to value him. A creeping question – why not me? – that he could not answer and could not stop asking.

His relationships followed the same pattern. They ended short, leaving him confused. Not because he lacked love, but because he didn't know how to carry them ahead with awareness. He was drawn to strong, decisive people – and they were drawn to him, at first, for the quality of his attention, his steadiness, his care. But over time, those same people grew frustrated by what they experienced as passivity.

His care, which had felt like presence earlier, had begun to feel like an absence of direction. Arguments ended the same way: he gave in every time to his friends and family. Just as he did at work.

Aran was not weak. He was, in fact, a person of considerable emotional strength – capable of absorbing difficulty, maintaining warmth under pressure, sustaining relationships that others would have abandoned. But emotional strength without assertiveness is only half of what a life requires. Aran's challenge was never capability. It was not even confidence. It was imbalance**.**

His Yin energy was strong – empathy, sensitivity, depth, the capacity to receive and hold – were fully developed. But his Yang energy – self-advocacy, clarity about his own needs, the willingness to claim what he had earned – was dormant, un-practiced, and in some cases had never been permitted to surface at all.

Aran was not incomplete as a person. He was incomplete in his range.

This is a case where until both his energies began to coexist in him – and he learned to bring his Yang into the spaces his Yin had long been holding alone – *he would continue giving everything and receiving nothing in return. He would continue to be taken for granted at work, overlooked for leadership, and drawn into relationships where power dynamics would be unequal. His struggle would continue to be silent, misunderstood even by himself.*

His story is not unusual. It is, with variations, the story of every person – man or woman – whose softness was formed and celebrated while their strength was never developed, or never given permission to exist.

Case 2 | More Yang less Yin | Strength leaves no space for Softness

Nancy had built her life on strength, and it had served her extraordinarily well.

She was decisive, efficient, and capable under pressure in ways that made her genuinely rare. In meetings, she was the person who cut through confusion and arrived at a clear direction while others were still identifying the problem. In negotiations, she held her position without anxiety. In crises, she moved rather than froze.

Her career reflected all of this. She had risen further and faster than most of her peers.

But outside work, a different pattern was emerging – quieter, and a bit difficult to explain – strength had become her only language, and her outside world reflected the same energy everywhere, and to everyone.

She preferred clarity over conversation. Action over emotion. Independence over intimacy.

Softness felt unnecessary. Vulnerability felt inefficient to her.

Relationships began well. People were drawn to her clarity and confidence, the same qualities that made her effective professionally. But they rarely deepened into anything that sustained. She was self-sufficient in a way that left no real space for another person's presence to matter in her life.

She did not understand it. She had everything she had worked for. And yet something was missing in a place she could not quite locate.

What she could not see from inside her own patterns was that her Yang energy – assertiveness, independence, decisiveness, the constant forward motion – had become the only mode available to her. Her Yin qualities of receptivity, softness, the willingness to be without needing to lead – had not been suppressed in a single dramatic moment – they had simply never been practiced in years.

The environments that formed her had rewarded her Yang consistently and found her Yin irrelevant, even inconvenient. And so, without ever deciding to, she had built a self that was extraordinarily capable in one direction and genuinely unavailable in the other.

She did not lack the capacity for connection. She lacked the practice of allowing it.

Nancy's challenge was not to become less of what she was. It was to become more on the other side of her - to recover the receptivity and softness that had gradually been crowded out. Not because those qualities would make her more acceptable to others, but because their absence was leaving her less whole than she deserved to be.

Nancy didn't lack love. She lacked balance.

These two cases – of Aran and Nancy – reflect a modern paradox. Two different people, both capable, both admired, both certain they are simply being themselves – and both, in truth, only half awake.

Aran and Nancy are not opposites so much as mirror images. One retreats from his own needs; the other leaves little room for anyone else's. One protects himself by yielding. The other protects herself by remaining in control. Yet beneath their differences lies the same pattern: each had learned to depend on one energy so much that the other had become unfamiliar. What began as protection slowly hardened into personality. Aran disappeared behind his sensitivity. Nancy stood behind her strength. Both believe this is simply who they are. In both cases, the very quality that once kept them safe eventually began to limit the life they were able to live.

The door each of them closed long ago, the one behind which love, softness, or self-worth stood waiting, never disappeared. It only waited for a reason to be opened.

Most of us are somewhere on this same spectrum.

And these imbalances do not remain contained within one person. They enter friendships, families, workplaces and intimate relationships. They shape who speaks, who yields, who pursues, who withdraws, who carries the emotional weight, and who controls the direction.

What happens next is where imbalance stops being a private struggle and becomes something shared. Because eventually, people shaped like Aran and people shaped like Nancy find each other. And when two incomplete energies meet, they either complete one another – or collide.

Chapter 7

What are Imbalanced Relationships?

They sat across from each other at dinner.

Same table. Same home. Same life they had built together over seventeen years.

He spoke about his day – targets, numbers, what had gone wrong in the afternoon meeting. She nodded, half listening or not quite listening: present in form, elsewhere in fact. When she spoke, it was about something small – how the house had felt empty lately, how she missed the feeling of them. He nodded. His phone buzzed. The moment passed.

No argument. No voices raised. No moment of acknowledgement of each other's presence. Just absence – the specific, accumulating absence of two people who have become very efficient at sharing a life without quite inhabiting it together.

Days became weeks. Weeks became years. They did everything right: shared responsibilities, managed finances, raised children, showed up when required. And yet something had gone quiet between them – not love, but connection. Not partnership, but the feeling of it.

Somewhere between being functional individuals and efficient co-managers of a shared existence, they had forgotten how to be together. They had mastered coordination, but lost the flow. They had mastered independence, but lost interdependence.

Their relationship was not broken. It was imbalanced.

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No two people enter a relationship as blank slates.

They bring with them their patterns, their conditioning, and energetic imbalances that they have absorbed over the years – the qualities that have been overdeveloped, or suppressed; the habitual responses that now feel natural to them, as if that is simply who they are.

When two people come together, these patterns do not stay separate. They meet. They interact. They reinforce each other or collide with each other, producing dynamics that neither person fully chose and that neither person, most of the time, can fully see.

This is where relationships get truly shaped – as success or failure. Not just by love. But by the combination of energies between two people.

A lot of relationships do not struggle because something goes missing between partners with time. They struggle because something stops being expressed, by one partner – when an energy gets suppressed and goes unexpressed for so long that it is forgotten it was ever there.

When one partner consistently overuses a particular way of being – always leading, always deciding, always holding control – while the other partner quietly retreats – the complementary energy in the relationship does not disappear. It weakens. It withdraws. It waits. It goes dormant. It accumulates in silence, until the relationship begins to feel heavy with the specific weight of things that are present but never allowed expression.

Most couples never realize what the problem in their marriage is. They blame each other, their behavior, or circumstances. Without realizing that they are symptoms of simply living out an energetic imbalance.

The four cases that follow are not cautionary tales. They are portraits of patterns that are, in varying degrees, everywhere, in the relationships we observe, in the ones we inhabit, in the ones we carry forward from the families that formed us.

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Case 1| When opposites attract but don't balance | A relationship that dwindled without fault

Yin & Yang partners in calcified roles

When Aran and Nancy, from our previous cases, met, it felt, to both of them, like an arrival. It felt like a perfect example of "opposites attract".

Aran admired Nancy's clarity – the way she moved through decisions without hesitation, the confidence she carried as though it had always been hers. Nancy, on the other hand, admired Aran's patience, his emotional depth, the quality of his attention that made her feel genuinely seen in a way that her more driven relationships never had.

What each lacked, the other seemed to embody. It felt, at the beginning, like completion.

In the early years, it worked. Nancy led naturally like she always had. She managed the finances, the decisions, and plans of their shared life. Aran held the emotional space – he was the one who remembered anniversaries, noticed when something was wrong before it was named, sustained the warmth, adjusted and supported.

From the outside, they looked ideal – partners who completed each other. A modern, complementary partnership – A strong woman. A caring man. A modern, progressive, perfect couple made for each other.

But balance is not created by opposites alone. It is created by flow. And flow requires that both people remain capable of moving dynamically within the roles, the characters, within all the threads of the relationship – that strength does not always have to be Nancy's and softness does not always have to be Aran's.

Over time, what once felt complementary began to feel heavy – without either of them intending it, their roles had calcified, with no change.

Nancy began to notice things she had once overlooked. She noticed that Aran avoided decisions, deflected when action was needed, disappeared into patience at moments that required directness and action.

What had once felt like calm began to feel passive and absence. She found herself managing everything and felt exhausted mentally and physically. And without realising it, her respect for him began to erode.

Her Yang intensified in response. She stepped in more, spoke more sharply, filled the vacuum his passivity created. And in doing so, she left no space for softness. Not for him, and eventually, not even for herself.

The other side of the story

Aran felt the shift without being able to name it. He was still the same – still caring, loyal, and giving everything he knew how to give. But now it was not enough, and he could not understand why. He could not see that his silence, his consistent willingness to yield, to allow Nancy to take all the decisions, had become not a gift but a weight. That the very quality he had offered as love was part of what was making Nancy feel alone, exhausted and drained now.

They were not incompatible. They were imbalanced – each in the particular way that made the other's imbalance worse.

Aran's Yin, without Yang, had become passivity. Nancy's Yang, without Yin, had become hardness. Both were strong people. But both were incomplete in the same way: they had each mastered one energy and left the other largely undeveloped. Their relationship had provided, for a while, the illusion that this was fine.

But their compatibility was not fine. It was simply deferred.

Nancy grew impatient. Her expectations from Aran rose. Aran, on the other hand, felt dismissed. Unseen. And slowly, a question formed within Aran: *Why is my care not enough?*

This is a pattern we are increasingly living today. Where opposites attract, but do not align. Because balance is not only about role reversal. It is not about one leading and the other following. It is about both energies existing within both individuals. Both being fluid in their roles, their energies, their areas of strength and sensitivity, their energies. Until that happens, even the most well-intentioned relationships begin to feel like a huge effort.

Love, alone, is not enough. Compatibility, alone, is not enough.

Without balance, relationships do not break loudly. They fade. And what remains is not conflict, but distance.

Case 2 | When Power meets Power | A marriage that became a battlefield

Two strong Yang partners

When Roy and Kiya met, there was instant "chemistry" between them.

They were both not the quiet types. They were full of energy and electric.

They were alike in the ways that felt exciting: both ambitious, both confident, both clear about what they wanted, and unwilling to apologise for the clarity. They spoke with assurance, decided quickly, moved through the world at speed.

There was no hesitation between them. No confusion. And they admired each other. Her strength matched his. His clarity matched hers. It felt like equality. It felt like partnership.

And for a while, it worked marvelously, and smooth like their careers – fast paced, purposeful, building toward something. Their careers were growing. Decisions and goals were aligned. They built together, planned together, and achieved together. They looked powerful.

They were a power-packed couple that had it all – success, independence, control.

However, gradually over the years, the same qualities that had drawn them together began to work against what they were trying to sustain. Power, when mirrored, does not always create balance. Sometimes, it creates resistance, and this is what happened in their case.

Every decision became a position. Every conversation shifted towards negotiation. Every disagreement became a contest. Neither knew how to yield without it feeling like defeat. Not because they didn't care about each other, but because aligning with the other felt like losing. Roy pushed his logic. Kiya pushed hers. Both right. Both certain. Both carrying the feeling of being right left no space for being heard, and after a while, being heard was what both of them were desperate for, without either being willing to go first.

The slow rise of conflict

Arguments became sharper. Silences grew longer. There was no softness in the relationship to absorb the impact of two strong people moving at full force – with no pause, no space to step back, no capacity in either of them to receive what the other was trying to offer, explain or do. There was only action – reaction – and counter-reaction.

They still functioned. Bills were paid, plans were made, life moved forward. But the "chemistry" between them had gone quiet. The ease of flow vanished. The relationship stopped feeling like a partnership. It started feeling like a battleground.

Roy and Kiya were not incompatible. They were too similar in one dimension and too undeveloped in the complemnentary dimension. Both carried strong Yang – drive, clarity, control, the forward momentum that makes things happen. But neither had developed their Yin – the receptivity, the softness, the patience to hear the other, and the capacity to rest into someone else's strength, to yield without losing anything that mattered.

Without Yin, there was no pause between them. No cushioning. No true intimacy – because intimacy requires the willingness to be received, and neither of them had learned how to be received. They only knew how to perform. They did not know how to arrive.

This is the paradox of a lot of modern relationships – two strong individuals who know how to win in the world, but don't know how to soften at home.

A relationship that has no space to hold will eventually break under its own force. Not from lack of love, but from a love that was never taught to be still.

Strength alone cannot sustain intimacy. Power alone cannot create connection

Balance is not about being equal in force. It is about being different in rhythm.

Love does not need more power. It needs more balance

Case 3 | When softness gives no direction | A relationship that stood still

Two strong Yin partners

When Dev and Rhea met, there was ease – a quiet understanding – "a sweet couple".

There was no friction, no need to establish dominance or prove anything. They understood each other without many words. Both were gentle, considerate, and attuned to each other, and to the people around them. They listened without interrupting. They adjusted without resentment.

When disagreement arose, they dissolved it through accommodation, and adjustment, rather than resolution, and neither felt this was a loss.

There was comfort in their sameness. A quiet kind of love – and that felt more than enough.

But softness, without the complementary energy of direction, does not sustain movement. There was no movement in their relationship – toward something, away from something, in some chosen direction – what a shared life requires.

Plans were made and not enacted. Decisions were postponed indefinitely. Opportunities arrived, were considered and discussed at length, and without any decision they passed. Neither pushed the other. Neither led. Neither took ownership of where their life together was going – not from lack of care, but from a shared avoidance of the conflict, disagreement, and discomfort to the other. Direction means choosing, and choosing means that something else is not chosen, and that is a form of conflict, however mild, that neither of them wanted to introduce in their lives.

So they waited – for clarity from each other – for the other partner to decide. And for the "right time." But nothing came.

From the outside, everything still appeared fine. No arguments, no visible tension. But inside both of them, a different kind of unease was building over the years – there was restlessness now.

Dev felt stuck in his career but had never voiced it – voicing it might create pressure, expectation, the possibility of disappointment. Rhea felt unseen but had never named it – naming it might feel like a complaint, and she did not want to be someone who complained.

There was no friction, but also no movement.

The quiet distance

Slowly, a distance formed between them. Not loud, not explosive, but quiet and present in the way that unspoken things are always present – as a weight carried under the surface of ordinary life. They sensed something was missing, but could not name it.

Conversations became repetitive, energy became low, and their excitement of sameness without conflict faded.

They were together, but not growing. And over time, that began to feel like loss.

Dev and Rhea were not lacking love. They were lacking Yang – the initiating, directional energy that turns care into forward motion. Their Yin was abundant: empathy, patience, the genuine desire to protect each other's comfort. But without the complementary Yang to give it structure and direction, their relationship had turned inward as stagnation. A beautiful, static thing. Warm but motionless.

Avoiding conflict is not the same as creating peace. Adjusting endlessly is not the same as building a life. It is like love that only holds, but never leads. It is like a river with no gradient – it does not flow. It sits, and quietly, over time, it stagnates.

Balance, in their case, required not less sensitivity but more courage to move forward, lead, take decisions, and perform. The courage to name what was missing. To choose a direction even with the knowing that it

might not be perfect. To bring their Yang into the space their Yin had so carefully, so considerately been holding for years.

This is the other extreme we often overlook. Where harmony is preserved, but growth is sacrificed in its place. Balance is not just about softening strength. It is also about activating direction, and moving forward with purpose.

Avoiding conflict is not the same as creating peace.

Adjusting endlessly is not the same as building a life or a relationship.

A relationship needs more than comfort. It needs movement. A flow.

Case 4 | When abuse meets adjustment | A marriage that should never be

Excessive Yang meets Excessive Yin

> **Important:** *This case describes a relationship involving emotional abuse and control. This is not a framework for tolerance. In abusive relationships, responsibility for abuse rests with the person causing harm; restoring balance never requires someone to endure abuse or change themselves to earn safety nor does it suggest that balance is a remedy for abuse. It is a framework for recognition, to examine the energetic patterns that create the conditions in which abuse can take root. Abuse – whether emotional, psychological, or physical – requires safety, boundaries, and professional support.*

When Aditya and Meera met, everything about it appeared, to themselves and to everyone around them, to be exactly right – like "a marriage made in the heavens."

Aditya seemed like a "Perfect Man". He was strong, confident, and decisive – someone who knew what he wanted and moved toward it without hesitation. Meera was a "Perfect Woman". She was warm, gentle, and deeply accommodating – someone who prioritised harmony and gave generously of her care.

He led. She supported. He decided. She trusted. From the outside, and for a time from the inside, it looked like the complementarity that balance is supposed to produce.

It felt like a perfect balance. To the outside world, it looked stable – a traditional marriage – functional and complete. But over the years, the relationship started getting deeply imbalanced.

Aditya liked being in control. His Yang was not the constructive, building, protective form of masculine energy. Beneath the confidence was something more rigid. There was self-obsession – a need to be right

always and any disagreement was attacked, a self-importance that required the people around him to be smaller in order for him to feel adequate. His certainty was not clarity – it was control that required ongoing submission – for every decision big or small – where to go, what to do, how things should be – was taken by him alone.

Meera didn't resist. She adjusted. Not out of weakness, but out of belief that love meant understanding, peace meant compromise. Her Yin had been formed by environments that equated love with accommodation, and peace with the suppression of her own needs. And so, she let things go – what to wear, who to meet, how to spend her time – no decision was hers – she let him decide everything for her. And it didn't feel wrong to her in the beginning – it felt like her partner's attention, and a sign of a loving relationship.

When control became addiction

Slowly, Aditya's confidence hardened into a narcissistic pattern. His perspective was all that mattered to him – instructions, rules, and arguments. His decisive nature turned into control, and control turned into domination.

She was now corrected in front of others for minor things. Her feelings were dismissed or reframed as overreaction. He held her responsible for his anger, his disappointments, his dissatisfactions, and she absorbed this responsibility because the alternative to that was to call him wrong – which to her was more frightening than the belief that she was.

As his control intensified, her room to act became smaller. And the more she complied under fear, the more space his patterns occupied. Her voice softened, then quieted, then largely stopped. Her confidence eroded. Her sense of herself – the person she had been before this relationship, was now re-organised around his needs. Her voice softened more and more. She stopped expressing. And then her identity disappeared.

And what had appeared to be love earlier, now revealed itself as abuse.

This is what extreme imbalance, in its most damaging form, produces: not just an unhappy dynamic, but the systematic disappearance of one person while the other expands.

Aditya believed, in the way that people whose distortions are long-standing always believe, that he was doing what strong people do – leading, providing, maintaining order. He could not see that his Yang had become a toxic narcissistic domination. It was not strength any more but it was dominance, not protection but possession, not leadership but control sustained by another person's fear.

Meera could not see, for a long time, that what she had absorbed as love was harm. That what she had accepted as normal was neither.

The relationship eroded. And what remained, was neither compatibility, nor marriage, nor the people in it.

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This case is about recognising a pattern without confusing responsibility. Aditya was responsible for his controlling and abusive behaviour. Meera's silence and accommodation were responses to the conditions she was living in. Her safety and autonomy mattered.

Imbalance in extreme, does not just create conflict. It creates abuse. Sometimes visible. Sometimes physical. But always deeply damaging. And until abusive energy gets balanced, it will continue to overpower. And the other will continue to disappear.

A relationship is not meant to be led by one, and followed by the other. It is meant to be held, by both.

Compatibility cannot survive in imbalance. Respect cannot exist in control.

And connection cannot grow where there is fear.

The Pattern behind these cases | Why relationships struggle

Aran. Nancy. Roy and Kiya. Dev and Rhea. Aditya and Meera.

Different people, different dynamics, different degrees of difficulty. And yet, running through all of them: is the same underlying pattern – too much of one energy, too little of the other.

Each relationship began with genuine feeling. Each person brought what they had. Each tried, in their own way, to make it work, but in that – one gave more, one took more. One led too much, one withdrew too often. One controlled, and one complied.

And yet something went wrong in the above cases – not because love was absent, not because effort or intention was absent, but because awareness was absent. None of them had been taught to see their own energetic patterns, and so they could not see what was driving the dynamics they were caught inside. None of them knew what was really happening, and why it was happening.

Even when one partner saw the behavior of the other, and felt the pain, they attributed it to personality, to incompatibility, to bad luck, to the specific flaws of their partner, and they blamed circumstances. But what they could not see was that they were themselves too, living out somethings they had learned, inherited, conditioned, and reinforced over the years of their being – and these absorbed conditionings had nothing to do with whether they were good people or loved each other. These conditionings are driving their lives, irrespective, without awareness.

This matters because it changes the question. The question is not: why did this happen to me? The question is: what pattern am I in, and what would it take to interrupt it? – about Awareness.

These cases are not just the story of the characters discussed. It is ours. We all carry imbalances in different ways, and at different intensities. And most of the time we don't even realise they exist, or are the root cause of most problems.

This is why so many relationships feel harder to simplify – because people are not aware from where to start disentangling them.

No relationship breaks overnight. It erodes quietly, through imbalance.

And no relationship heals overnight. It rebuilds slowly, through awareness.

We have been taught by society, our friends and families about how to succeed, how to perform, how to achieve, how to adjust and how to sacrifice. But we have not been taught how to use these attributes to create balance – what balance means and how to achieve it. As a result, when two imbalanced people come together, relationships become places of confusion rather than connection – not because the people in them are wrong, but because they are incomplete in ways no one ever helped them see.

The answer to imbalance is not to become someone else. But to become whole.

Because balance is not a concept. It is a practice. A conscious choice.

Balance is not optional. It is essential.

The Inheritance of Imbalance

A very important dimension of imbalance, that is easily overlooked, but cannot be left unaddressed is that an Imbalance does not end with the people who carry it. It gets passed on.

Children learn from observing before they learn from what they are told. They absorb their parents' patterns, the quality of their parents' relationship – the way a conflict is navigated or avoided, the way emotions are expressed or suppressed, the way power moves between the adults in their home – not as conscious lessons but as templates that they sub-consciously absorb – as instructions for what relationships are, what they feel like, what is normal within them. Children emulate their parents because it is what they know – because what is modelled in childhood becomes, in time, the baseline for what feels like home, and 'the normal', to them.

A child who grows up watching one parent disappear into accommodation learns, without anyone saying it, that love requires selflessness to the point of self-erasure – sacrifice to any extent is 'normal'. A child who grows up watching one parent dominate learns, that strength means getting your way – controlling everything and everyone is 'normal'. A child who grows up in a home where emotions are suppressed learns to suppress theirs and carries that suppression into every relationship they form – hiding feelings, and not expressing, is 'normal'.

This is why the work of recognising and interrupting imbalance within each one of us, matters beyond the individual who does it to us. To become more balanced – to develop the energy that has been dormant, to temper the energy that has been excessive – is not only a personal act. It is, quietly, an act of protection for every person who will learn from watching you live.

Unless relationships are balanced, the imbalance will not only destroy relationships in one generation, but impact all future generations.

And this imbalance which an individual carries does not stop at their family. Each child carrying an inherited imbalance grows up to become a partner, a colleague, a manager, a citizen, and perhaps a leader – with the same imbalance, but may be amplified multiple times.

The accommodator who learnt that love means disappearing may become the employee who cannot say no, or the manager who allows a toxic culture to continue because confrontation feels unbearable. The dominator who learnt that strength means control may become the boss who cannot delegate, or the leader who mistakes fear for respect.

This is how imbalance becomes an endless loop – and how it compounds rather than simply repeats – it multiplies outward – into every workplace its children enter, every relationship they form, every community and institution they go on to shape – and each of those, in turn, becomes the template for the generation watching them.

The imbalance does not travel in a straight line from parent to child. It travels in a widening circle, gathering more people, more institutions, more of the world into its shape with every generation it passes through. A pattern that begins in one home can become a workplace culture, then an institutional norm, and eventually part of the collective way of being.

With every generation that inherits imbalance without questioning it, its reach grows wider and its consequences greater. What is left unaddressed in one home does not stay contained. It scales.

The following chapters turn from the problem to the possibility. From the shape of the imbalance to the practice of restoring it – beginning, as it must begin, with the individual, and moving outward from there.

Interlude | The Turn

The first half of this book has been a diagnosis.

It has traced a single pattern from the nervous system running on permanent emergency, through the marriages that drift without anyone intending the drift, to the relationships where one person slowly disappears while the other expands. By now you would have related to something or the other in one of the chapters – a symptom, a pattern, a habit, a consequence. Not everything. But something.

Something enough to ask the question this turn is built around: if this is the imbalance then what corrects it?

The answer begins with naming what has been lost – the complementary feminine energy – that has been long misread as softness, and weakness and pushed aside, and suppressed in all of us. It is not the presence of strength that is breaking the world. It is the absence of what complements it. This suppression has accumulated in the entire living system so deeply, that it has now become a crisis that demands immediate attention if we are to sustain, if our relationships, our society and our world are to sustain.

Reclaiming what has been suppressed is not a soft act. It is, in many ways, the most demanding thing this book asks of anyone. Because what has been suppressed was suppressed for reasons to survive, to succeed, to be taken seriously within systems built over many years – and allowing it back will require awareness, a strong willingness, preparedness and acceptance to be seen differently. To be understood differently. To risk appearing less than what the system expects – but more complete and balanced.

This awareness and willingness is where the restoration begins.

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At this point, a conclusion may present itself very naturally in many minds: the world has too much masculine energy, so is the solution to put more women in power? Isn't that what our system has already been trying to do for so many years by pushing for gender equality, more women in leadership, and at all levels, reservation and special privileges for women – so what is new that we are talking about in this book?

This is a reasonable question to have. But it is not the complete answer, and the incompleteness of it is worth sitting with before the second half of this book begins.

History has shown that women in power have shown themselves fully capable of leading with force, with dominance, and with the willingness to act without restraint. Boudica. Indira Gandhi. Margaret Thatcher. Each responded to the specific pressures of their time and to the requirement of the system – not with sensitivity but with strength.

However, each of these cases and more, have only demonstrated something the simple version of the 'more women' argument cannot accommodate: that gender does not determine energy. The system does. These women were also given access to power within systems built entirely on Yang – they were expected to perform with strength and not emotions. And when the system selects Yang, the people who rise within it, regardless of who they are – a man or a woman – will naturally lead with Yang.

Therefore, while more women in leadership is necessary. But it is not sufficient as a solution to the problem.

What the world needs is not more force in a different packaging.

It needs more Yin energy – in both men and women alike – in leaders of every gender, in systems of every kind, and in the understanding of what strength actually looks like when it is doing its best work.

Balance is not the replacement of one gender by another, or one energy with the other. It is the conscious, sustained presence of both – the Yang that acts and the Yin that restores, the strength that pushes forward and the wisdom that knows when to pause.

When these two move together, changes will be evident in the quality of what is built — in the home, in the organisation, in the nation. Not weaker, but more whole. And wholeness, as the evidence of every preceding chapter has demonstrated, is more durable than dominance.

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If the imbalance in the world did not begin in governments or boardrooms, but rather in the interior of individuals — in the patterns absorbed, in the adaptations made under pressure, in the slow replacement of natural energies with another in order to survive – then its correction should also begin in the same place.

The chapter that follows does not begin with the world. It begins with us, with you – with the specific patterns that live in your personality and in your daily behavior. It gives a framework for seeing yourself clearly enough that the change which follows can actually hold – not as self-improvement. But as restoration.

The return, in full, of what was always there.

Chapter 8

Restoring balance within

So far this book has traced the cause of the imbalance to a single pattern of the systematic dominance of one energy over another – and that runs from the architecture of global power down through the texture of individual lives. Through nations that confuse control with leadership, organisations that mistake speed for excellence, relationships where one person slowly disappears while the other expands, and the private interior of a person who has spent so long performing strength that they have quietly lost access to everything else.

If this imbalance of energies is what has shaped us all this while – our personalities, our relationships, our society and our world – then restoring balance within us is not a choice. It is a critical necessity.

But restoring balance is often misunderstood as becoming less of who you presently are, or choosing one energy over the other – Yin over Yang, or Yang over Yin. However, in truth, it is also not about suppressing strength or forcing softness that already exists.

Balance is about bringing back what has been left behind – the awareness to know when to act and when to pause, when to lead and when to listen, when to assert and when to receive.

Therefore, addressing this imbalance requires more than surface-level reforms.

It requires a fundamental shift in values – one that consciously restores feminine energy not as a supportive or secondary quality, but as a foundational strength, where masculine energies have taken over, and vice versa in case of feminine energies.

Importantly, the balance, we are seeking, begins not in the world outside but rather in us – balancing from within, at home, in each one of us.

It begins with the question:

Which parts of myself have I been living without? And what would it mean to stop treating their absence as acceptable?

Hold this question with you, as the rest of this chapter, and the chapters that follow, are an attempt to answer it, beginning from where all lasting change begins: from within.

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What is restoring balance Within? How do we get there?

Restoring balance from within does not mean becoming someone new. It does not require a transformation, which is dramatic, visible, or external.

It is quieter than that – it is the act of waking up what has been asleep, of bringing forward what has been suppressed, and allowing space for what has been denied expression. It is a gentle but deliberate shift from overdrive to awareness, from reaction to choice, and from a habit to consciousness.

Balancing, then, does not mean becoming less of who we are or diminishing the energy that is already strong within us. Whether we lean more towards Yin or Yang, the invitation is to nurture its quieter counterpart – to awaken the energy we have suppressed and allow it to grow alongside what already exists. To raise the suppressed energy to balance with what already exists. We can retain our strength (existing Yang) while deepening our softness (increasing Yin), or honour our gentleness (existing Yin) while finding our assertiveness (increasing Yang). Balance grows as we give both energies room to be expressed.

And before this shift can happen anywhere else – in a relationship, a decision, a boundary – it has to happen inside the body first. This is because the patterns we repeatedly live, do not remain only in the mind within us. Over time, they are carried by the body too, and outwards to our external world.

The first important determinant of our patterns is the modern life system that often feels as though we are driving with our foot permanently pressed against the accelerator – constantly moving, responding, achieving, solving, anticipating. We accelerate, but rarely remember to brake – to slow down, or to stop. The imbalance becomes a natural result.

On the contrary, a healthy, balanced system, knows how to do both – accelerating under real effort, and applying brakes to return, just as naturally, to stillness, once the moment has passed. But most of us have lost that rhythm. We are constantly on the go.

And once the body slows down, something else becomes possible – not just rest, but release. Because a system that has finally learned how to stop accelerating is also a system that can finally loosen its grip.

This is the second, and quieter, part of restoring balance within: opening yourself to change, and allowing life to unfold its own surprises, rather than gripping every outcome in an effort to control it.

Most of us block ourselves from other people, situations, and outcomes, trying to control every part of our lives – disappearing into the drive to fix, to lead, to hold everything together, mostly to protect ourselves from the fear of losing something, of being judged, of being out of control, and of not being enough without it.

Opening oneself to uncertainties, imperfections, and failures, is a strong way to restoring balance – not by force, but by small, deliberate steps. It begins with starting to believe that opening yourself to others, to uncertainty, to not knowing, does not make you weak. With exploring the possibility that you do not have to do everything alone – that you are allowed to receive, that outcomes can unfold without your hand on every one of them, and that you can learn not to run from stillness. Slowly, this is how the suppressed part of you will begin to rise.

The best part of restoring balance is that you are not missing anything.

Because you are already whole.

The Universe has placed both Yin and Yang within each one of us - they already coexist in us. All that is needed is awareness to activate both energies, especially the dormant, suppressed one, and the willingness to make small changes in them.

Stay with me in this chapter, as we explore steps to restoring balance within.

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Case | The time she realized

She checked her phone before her eyes had fully opened.

Emails. Messages. Notifications. Three deadlines already waiting, and the day had not even started yet. By noon she had responded to thirty conversations. By evening she could not remember a single one that had mattered.

That night, she sat in silence for the first time in months. No phone, no noise, no urgency pressing in from every direction. And what surfaced was not the peace she might have hoped for.

It was exhaustion she had been outrunning.

She had not been living fast. She had been running from stillness. And in that moment, sitting with herself in a quiet she had been avoiding for longer than she could account for, something became undeniable: the pace of her life was not a reflection of her ambition.

It was a symptom of her imbalance.

She did not know it yet in those terms. But she was about to find out.

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The first step: Cut the noise

Yin energy cannot emerge in a life that is perpetually overstimulated. It cannot surface in a nervous system that is always alert, always reacting, always producing. Before any framework can be applied, and before any practice can take root, small simpler steps must be taken.

Therefore, the first step among all, given that Yang energy is most rampant in the world and at its peak, is that the noise must reduce – the endless scrolling, the constant notifications, and the pressure to respond, react, and produce.

Same is true for the Yin-dominant person who keeps responding to everyone else because their own voice has become difficult to hear. Different patterns. The same problem: there is no space between what happens and how we automatically respond to it.

For everyone the step is – pause and cut the noise. Not as an escape, and not as a permanent withdrawal from the world's demands – but as a deliberate, recurring act of restoration. Create spaces in the day where nothing is expected. No output, no performance, no achievement

measured or implied. Just presence, silence, boredom, and stillness. The permission to be without immediately doing anything, without guilt.

Feminine energy thrives in calmness, in presence, in the quality of receptivity that becomes available only when urgency is not running the room. It cannot be forced into existence. It can only be allowed. And allowing it begins with the simplest, most counter-cultural act available to a person living inside a Yang-overdriven world – Stop. Fully. Not strategically. But actually. Stop.

And in that stopping, notice what is there. Listen.

The second step: Build awareness

Silence, and cutting off the noise clear the space in which imbalance can finally be seen. And once the noise has quietened, a different kind of work begins – of noticing. Not judging, not analysing, not immediately trying to fix anything. Just noticing. What do you do, by default, under pressure? Do you disappear, or do you take over? Do you soften your voice until it is barely audible, or do you raise it until it is the only one in the room? Do you say yes when your whole body is screaming no?

Awareness about the patterns you follow naturally and unconsciously, is the next important conscious step towards creating balance – because only the patterns you see and notice – can be broken and changed. This is not self-criticism, nor introspection. It is simple observation.

Most people spend their entire lives inside their imbalance without ever once stepping outside it long enough to notice its shape. Awareness is that step outside. It is the moment the pattern stops being invisible and becomes, instead, something you can finally look at with a clear lens.

You cannot change what you refuse to see. And you cannot see what you have never paused long enough to notice.

Meditation offers an invitation to creating this awareness. As we sit quietly, we may become more aware of our breath and of the noise within our minds. That awareness is already a beginning: we are noticing what the busyness of life may have concealed. In the language of this

book, we are making room for Yin – for stillness, receptivity and quiet presence. We do not need to make the breath inaudible or force every thought to disappear. We can let the breath remain natural, allow thoughts to come and go, and gently return our attention to the present. Stillness grows through allowing ourselves to settle, without turning silence into another thing to achieve.

The third step: Read your body

Awareness does not end in the mind. Our patterns often announce themselves in the body before we consciously recognise them.

Excess Yang, most often than not, shows up as faster, shallower breathing, raised shoulders, a clenched jaw, tight hands, restlessness, hurried movements, faster speech, or an almost physical urge to do something – fix, answer, decide, control, finish.

Learn to recognise these signals. And then, instead of trying to think yourself into calmness, begin with working on the body.

Unclench the jaw, let the shoulders fall away from the ears, relax the hands, slow your movements. And most importantly, slow the breath. Breathe gently and consciously, allowing the exhale to become slower and easier. Sit still for another minute. Leave a little silence before responding. Let somebody finish speaking. Do one thing at a time.

In fact, our breath offers a way to understand the rhythm of Yin and Yang. Through this lens, the inhalation can represent Yang – the drawing in, the expansion, the gathering of energy, while the exhalation can represent Yin – the release, the softening, the letting go. When we notice ourselves breathing hurriedly or with effort in a moment of tension, we can take it as an invitation to pause. Allowing the breath to flow gently in and slowly out, without forcing either movement, becomes a small practice of welcoming Yin. Each out-breath offers a moment to loosen our grip, while each in-breath reminds us that receiving and releasing belong together.

Sometimes increasing Yin begins this simply.

Not by changing your entire life, but by softening what has been bracing itself against it.

These small physical shifts create a pause between activation and action. They remind the body that not every moment is an emergency, and that it is possible to be strong without being rigid, productive without being perpetually rushed, and alert without always being on guard.

Going within, then, is not merely a philosophical idea. Instead it is also, and more importantly a physical practice to start with.

Sometimes the first movement towards balance is simply to notice where you are holding tension, and then consciously letting some of it go.

The fourth step: Willingness to change

If Awareness reveals the pattern. Then Willingness interrupts it.

Without the willingness to change, you can know exactly how your imbalance operates – every trigger, every pattern, every well-worn groove it runs through – but still wake up every morning and run the same groove again. Knowing is not the same as choosing. And this is where most people's work quietly stalls – not from a lack of insight, but from a lack of willingness to act on the insight they already have.

At some point, knowing has to become choosing. And willingness is not a single dramatic decision. It rarely announces itself. It shows up in smaller, less cinematic moments – the instant before you say yes out of habit, the second before you raise your voice to regain control, the pause before you disappear into someone else's needs.

Willingness is choosing, in that instant, to do something different than what the pattern demands. It is uncomfortable, almost every time. Old patterns exist because they once felt safe. Choosing differently, even in the smallest way, will not feel safe. It will feel exposed.

Do it anyway. Because willingness is not the absence of discomfort. It is the decision that discomfort will no longer make every choice for you – that is willingness.

The fifth step: Practicing small steps

Beneath this slowing down, something more difficult, and maybe the most difficult step, still exists: the practice of taking small steps.

Balance is not restored through one great act of transformation. It is restored through hundreds of small corrections made in ordinary moments.

For example, the practice of releasing control. Of allowing others to carry responsibility that you have been quietly absorbing – building trust – in life, in people, in timing, and in your own self. Of letting outcomes unfold without rushing to direct them. Of sitting with "not knowing." And without treating "not knowing" as an emergency.

These small acts may appear insignificant. But they are not.

Notice the small moments when urgency takes over – when you rush to finish a task, or find yourself walking as though you are late even when there is no need to hurry. Ask yourself: does this moment require speed, or is rushing simply my habit? Try and avoid unnecessary fire in everyday life. If there is room to slow down, practise doing so deliberately. Ease your pace, soften your steps, and give the task your attention without racing towards its end. Begin with one such moment each day, allowing yourself to discover that you can move forward without always being in a hurry.

Every time you respond differently, you strengthen a part of yourself that has had too little practice. Every boundary develops Yang where Yang has been dormant. Every act of receiving develops Yin where Yin has been suppressed. Every pause before reacting creates a little more room between instinct and choice.

Practiced repeatedly, these small steps become a new default. A new groove, worn slowly enough to hold.

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These five steps – cutting the noise, building awareness, reading your body, choosing willingness, practicing in small moments – are where balance begins.

First, we create space. Then we see. We learn to recognise what our body is telling us. We choose differently. And finally, through repetition, we begin to turn that choice into a new way of being.

The following section helps you decode the step of creating awareness using a mirror. Specific enough to show you not just that you are imbalanced – you already know that, in some form, or you would not have stayed with this book this far – but how your particular imbalance operates. What it looks like in your relationships, your decisions, your habitual responses to conflict and to pressure and to the needs of the people around you. The framework that follows is that mirror.

The Four Quadrants of Personality types | Identify which one are you

It is hard for any one of us to make sense of the particular shape that imbalance inside us has taken, without any reference point to start with, and know exactly where you have been standing.

The framework being suggested helps you see exactly that – by identifying the box you may already be living in – the response you return to automatically, the energy you rely on most, and the part of yourself that may need to be developed first.

The framework that follows draws, in part, from a tradition of thinking about human behaviour that began in the management research of the 1970s. Psychologists Kenneth W. Thomas and Ralph H. Kilmann developed a tool using five modes – to help individuals understand the range of behaviours available to them when dealing with conflict – that everyone responds to pressure differently, depending on their personality, the context, and what is at stake. The framework used in this book, however, is distinct from Thomas and Kilmann's original five modes of human behavior which is a registered trademark of its publisher, nor a claim to replicate it.

The four archetypes framework that this book uses, is an adaptation that I had come across in a workshop I had attended. It has been discussed here in the language that fits the territory we are exploring, to tell us about the energy we are running on, and what we might be suppressing in order to stay in the pattern that feels most familiar – by placing them against the following two dimensions: Goals, and Relationships – and we can call this framework – The Balance Quadrant.

The Balance Quadrant

The framework that follows divides human behaviour into four broad patterns, and observes how people handle life and which quadrant they default to automatically in their actions.

Where you land on these two axes – shows how much weight you give to each of the two dimensions – Goals and Relationships – and how readily you sacrifice one for the other. It helps in revealing the shape of your energetic imbalance with considerable precision, so that you can explore your personality further before taking the next step of changing the energy you work from.

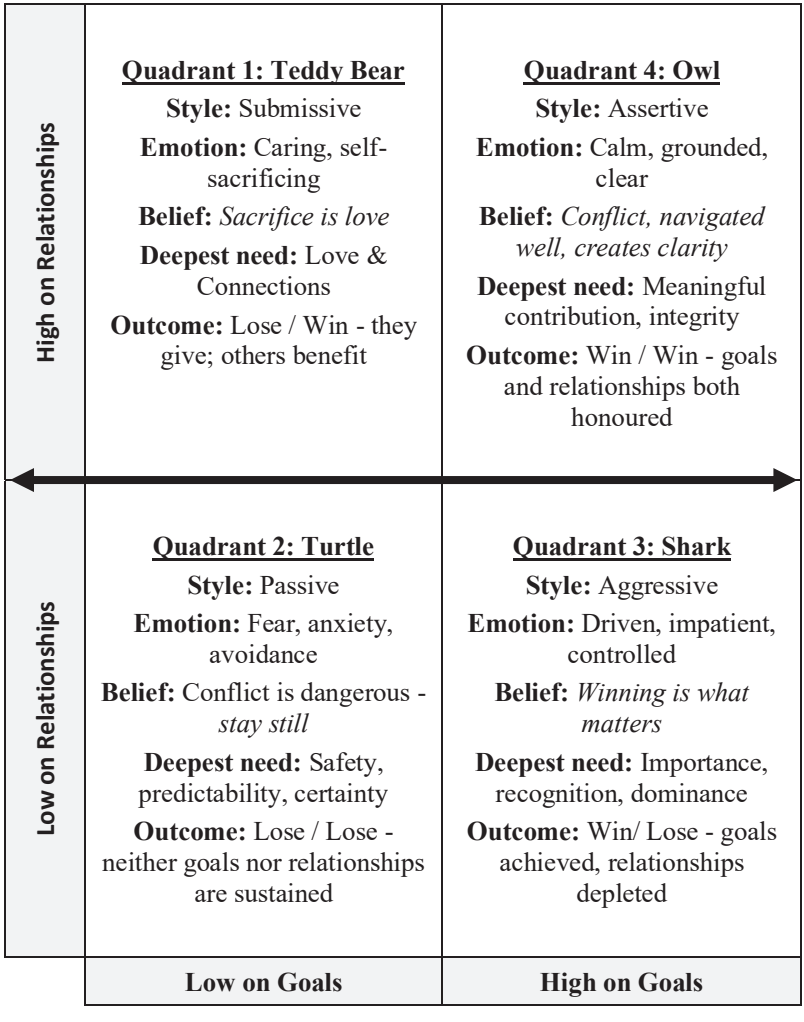
According to it some people default to their goals at the expense of their relationships, some to their relationships at the expense of their goals, some withdraw from both, and a few – with awareness and practice – manage to honour both simultaneously.

Most people will recognise themselves immediately in one of these patterns. Some will see themselves in a combination. A few will realise they have been living different patterns at different points in their life, shifting in response to circumstance.

All of that is useful information for creating awareness of where you currently are.

Please note that this framework is not a verdict, but a good starting point.

The Balance Quadrant framework



Quadrant 1: The Teddy bear personality type

The Teddy Bear is a Submissive personality type, who chooses harmony over everything, without thinking twice.

They are Very High on Relationships, and Very Low on Goals.

This personality is high on Yin energy, with a strong focus on softness, care, and emotional connection. Their deeper need is to value Relationships over everything else, and most often, above their own personal goals or self-interest.

These individuals are warm, giving, and empathetic. They believe that sacrifice is love, and love is sacrifice. And hence they always prioritise others, and at their own cost.

But this personality comes with a consequence. They are often taken for granted – at work, among friends and even in their own families.

The result? Lose–Win.

They quietly lose, while others in their life (Win) benefit.

Quadrant 2: The Turtle personality type

The Turtle is a Passive personality type, whose behavior is driven by fear.

Like a tortoise that retreats into its shell at the slightest touch, this personality avoids both conflict and risk at all times – mostly like a Yin overdrive.

Therefore, they prioritise neither. They are low on both their Relationships, and their Goals.

They do not risk taking a stand for their relationships, nor at their work place.

Their deeper need is Safety at all times, predictability, and emotional security. Their underlying belief is simple: conflict is dangerous, so it is better to avoid it altogether.

The result? Lose–Lose.

Neither do they achieve their goals in life, nor do they nurture their relationships. They lose, because they are low on any action or decision, and as a result, others in their life, also lose in the long run.

Quadrant 3: The Shark personality type

The Shark is an Aggressive personality type, who is strongly driven, focused, and relentless.

This is a pure Yang energy focusing on constant action, ambition, control. Goals matter. Outcomes matter. Winning matters.

Relationships, emotions, and sensitivity often take a back seat.

Therefore, they are very low on Relationships, and very high on Goals.

Sharks are often intense, sometimes impatient, and mostly aggressive.

Their deeper need is importance, recognition, and growth. They love to feel powerful, in control, and ahead.

The result? Win–Lose.

While they Win, it is usually at the cost of others, who end up losing.

Their goals are achieved, but often at the cost of connection and relationships – their family and friends.

Quadrant 4: The Owl personality type

The Owl is an Assertive personality type. They are largely Balanced in action.

This is not an instinctive style. This type of personality is a conscious choice.

They are high on both Relationships, and on Goals.

The Owl neither attacks like the Shark, nor withdraws like the Turtle, nor submits like the Teddy Bear.

It observes. It pauses. It understands. And then it responds, with clarity and respect.

It can say: “I agree.” Or, “I don’t agree.” Without aggression. Without fear.

The Owl believes that conflict is not something to avoid, but something to navigate wisely.

Its emotional state is calm. Its intent is constructive.

Its deeper need is meaningful contribution.

The result? Win–Win.

They Win, and in the long run, others around them also win with them.

The Owl seeks solutions where both goals and relationships are honoured, and where there is win for all.

The Balance framework in practice

The four Balance quadrants are not fixed categories. They are tendencies that shape how we respond naturally when we are not choosing consciously, but reacting by default – automatically, without thinking – and therefore leaning towards one personality type.

And the quadrant we tend to occupy most often does not emerge in isolation. It is shaped over time by many of the forces we have already explored – our upbringing, relationships, social conditioning, expectations, fear, the need for approval or control, the roles we were rewarded for playing, and the environments in which we learned what felt safe. What begins as adaptation, slowly becomes our personality through long constant repetition, and we start believing our quadrant to be our true nature.

Therefore, the problem is not being in any one quadrant but rather being stuck there. Balance is not a destination at which we arrive and remain. It is a practice of constant, quiet adjustment of noticing where we have defaulted, understanding what pulled us there, and choosing differently when the moment gives us the opportunity.

The goal, therefore, is not to become permanently one quadrant, but to develop the range to move between all four as the situation requires – consciously, deliberately, and without losing our sense of self in the movement.

The entire practice of balance can be remembered in five simple words:

Stop. See. Soften. Choose. Practice.

Stop before the automatic response takes over.

See the pattern of what you are thinking, feeling and about to do.

Soften what has tightened in the body – the breath, the jaw, the shoulders, the urgency.

Choose what this moment actually requires rather than what your habitual personality demands.

Then practise that response often enough for choice to slowly become capacity.

This is how we begin to move between the quadrants.

Not by changing who we are, but by becoming less imprisoned by our defaults.

The more consciously we practise, the greater our range becomes. We learn when to assert and when to receive, when to lead and when to listen, when to hold on and when to let go.

That is balance in practice.

The situations that follow will show how these quadrants appear in our everyday life, and how the same person can respond very differently when awareness replaces blind automaticity.

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When to be a Teddy Bear

The Teddy Bear's natural capacity of warmth, genuine care, the ability to prioritise another person's wellbeing – is not a weakness to be corrected every time. It is a strength that has not been given its due importance in our world, but should get its due in our lives.

There are moments when this personality has its place in the balance: with people you love, in situations where preserving connection matters more than proving a point, in relationships where another person is fragile and it is okay to say "you win", and when what is needed from you is simply presence rather than direction.

The balancing practice, for someone who is a Teddy bear personality, is not to become less caring. It is to develop the distinction to know when caring requires speaking rather than just absorbing and when the most loving thing is to hold a boundary rather than dissolve one.

Not every sacrifice is love. Sometimes it is simply the avoidance of discomfort disguised as consideration, sometimes the main reason for one's own submission to others, and allowing them to rule over you.

When to be a Turtle

Stillness, practiced consciously, is not passivity. There are genuine moments when the wisest response to a situation is not to engage with it but rather withdraw from it – when emotions are running too high for clarity, when stepping in would only escalate what already cannot be resolved, when silence communicates more accurately than words could. In such situations, the most balanced response is to not react at all – and to retract from the situation for some time.

The balancing practice, for someone who is a Turtle personality by default, is to distinguish between chosen stillness and fear-driven withdrawal. The Turtle who retreats because the situation genuinely does not require their engagement is exercising wisdom. The Turtle who retreats because engaging might produce discomfort is practicing avoidance. The difference is detectable from the inside, once you know what you are looking for.

When to be a Shark

There are moments when the situation genuinely requires the Shark's energy – when decisiveness cannot wait for full consensus, when a deadline is real and the comfort of the people involved is temporarily secondary to it, when a leader must make a difficult call that will not be welcomed by all. Being a Shark in such situation is not toxic. It is necessary.

The balancing practice, for someone who is a Shark personality by default, is to notice the cost of being aggressive on the people around them – and to genuinely ask what those people might need, and understand the quality of the environment that is being created with your aggression versus by giving others a chance. The Shark who becomes an Owl and chooses wisely, does not lose their drive. They gain the wisdom to deploy it without depleting everything it touches.

When to be an Owl

The Owl is often presented as the goal – the balanced personality, the assertive communicator, the leader who honours both relationships and results. And it is the direction worth moving in. But it is worth being honest about what the Owl actually is: it is not a resting state, but a capacity that requires ongoing effort to maintain, observe, be aware, and then make a move.

The Owl does not remain an Owl (observing) at all times. It moves to one of the other three personalities as the situation demands, and then returns to being an observer. The Owl who fears a situation getting out of control, becomes a Turtle. The Owl under threat of loss becomes a Shark. The Owl who loves deeply becomes a Teddy Bear. This is not failure. It is the human condition. The difference is that the Owl notices the need of the hour – and has the capacity to shift from one personality to another, and once the pressure eases, to return back to observing.

That noticing and adapting consciously – that moment of recognition between the default and the choice – is what this entire chapter has been building toward.

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Where this leads

Imbalance does not hide in dramatic moments. It hides in what feels normal – in the reactions so habitual that they stop feeling like choices, in the patterns so familiar that they cease to feel like patterns at all.

And therefore, balance starts with awareness – with the recognition of which quadrant you default to. Then an honest examination of what that default has been costing you: in your energy, in your relationships, in the distance between the life you are living and the life you deserve to live.

Then, taking one small conscious action at a time — in the moments that everyday life offers – you begin to choose your personality differently, every time depending on what the situation asks of you. Not by becoming someone else. But by expanding into the full range of who you can truly become.

The good news is that you are not missing anything. Only something is underused. And what is underused can be awakened by choice.

The chapters that follow take this inward work outward – into the relationships you share with specific people, into the organisations you work within, and eventually into the broader world. But the thread that runs through all of it begins here, in this chapter, in the single question that genuine restoration always starts from:

Which version of myself have I been defaulting to?

And which version of myself have I been leaving behind?

Chapter 9

Restoring balance in relationships

You now have a map of your own pattern from the last chapter – the quadrant you default to, the energy you overuse, the energy you leave behind.

Awareness and conscious knowledge of your energy pattern – where you operate from – is the first step towards balance.

This knowledge becomes especially useful when you bring it into the spaces you share with other people.

Because relationships do not live in isolation. They are where two patterns and energies meet. And when they meet without awareness, they collide, they strike against each other, there is friction, or worse, they calcify into roles that neither person consciously chose and neither knows how to leave.

For example, the responsibility of providing for a family comes with its own challenges. There are needs to fulfil, decisions to make, problems to solve and people who depend on us for their security and well-being. These responsibilities naturally demand more of our masculine energy - the energy of action, discipline, strength, protection and control. Those who carry the responsibility of providing for others often find themselves operating predominantly from this masculine energy, not necessarily out of choice, but out of necessity. It becomes a way of life. And somewhere along the way, the very qualities that help us fulfil our responsibilities can begin to dominate how we relate to those we love.

What was necessary for survival and stability may not always be what is needed for emotional connection.

What is equally necessary, then, is to recognise when life requires us to lead with strength and when it asks us to return to softness. The same person who must be decisive, disciplined and in control while fulfilling responsibilities must also learn to pause, listen, share decisions, express vulnerability and allow themselves to receive love and care. We do not need to abandon our masculine energy to embrace our feminine energy. We need the awareness to move between the two, as the moment and relationship require. Because the qualities that help us provide for a family are not always the same qualities that help us connect with them. A family needs both – the strength that holds it together and the softness that makes it feel like home.

Also, balance in relationship does not mean a 50-50 transaction between the partners. It is not about equal effort at every moment or identical contributions at every stage.

It is neither a competition, nor a forced equality. It is about the freedom to move – to give more when you have more to give, to receive when you need to be received.

It is the act of allowing what has been suppressed to re-enter and to grow equally – bringing softness where there has been only strength, receptivity where there has been only control, pause where there has been only action.

And bringing voice where there has been only silence, direction where there has been only accommodation, presence where there has been only withdrawal.

A relationship does not need two strong individuals. It needs two aware individuals — willing to move.

Four cases were discussed in Chapter 7, each stuck in a version of this imbalance. The following 4 cases are a continuation of those 4 cases where their imbalance becomes recognisable, specific, honest about the cost they are bearing. Each one traces a shift. Not a transformation. Not a resolution. A shift where one person decides to change what they bring into the room, without waiting for the other person to go first.

> *Willingness to change the pattern – one person, one decision, without guarantee of outcome – is the second step towards restoring balance.*

Think back to the cases from Chapter 7, and see how they restored balance in their relationships.

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Case 1 | How Nancy and Aran restored balance

A Shark & a Teddy bear

We read that she was the Shark in the relationship – decisive, forward-moving, quietly taking control of everything because no one else moved fast enough. He was the Teddy Bear – warm, generous, accommodating, giving everything, he had to the relationship and receiving almost nothing back. She led. He adjusted. The roles had calcified before either of them noticed they had become their naturally assumed roles.

What Nancy changed

The shift did not begin with a conversation. It began with a pause.

Nancy was drained and exhausted of being on the go. She could not see why her mind and body were always in motion. One evening she just sat and started outside the window. And she started noticing how often she was operating from Shark mode in spaces that did not require it. At work, the Shark was essential to deliver. But at home, she was applying the same energy to dinner plans, weekend schedules, daughter's school decisions – every small domestic question resolved before Aran had the chance to engage with it.

She decided to make one small but deliberate change – she stopped deciding first.

When Aran asked where they should eat, she waited. When their daughter had a question about the weekend, she told her to ask her father. When a household decision needed to be made, she brought it to him as an open question rather than a proposal requiring approval.

The first few weeks were very uncomfortable, and she wanted to jump in and fix whenever and whatever he was taking too long to resolve. But she stayed with the discomfort.

And over a few months, Aran started showing up – in the conversations, in the decisions, in the energy of the household. He had opinions she had not known he held, because she had never left room for them. He took ownership of things she had always assumed were hers to manage, and he managed them differently – sometimes better, sometimes differently, and either way, not wrong.

With these changes, Nancy didn't get less competent. But she definitely got less alone. She now felt her responsibilities being shared by both, and Aran felt more involved.

What Aran changed

Aran's shift was equally hard. He was used to a style of response now in the house. And the change required him to do something the Teddy Bear finds genuinely threatening: step up and take space.

As Nancy started giving him space, he began to state his preferences instead of deferring them. He disagreed without immediately retreating when she pushed back. He started initiating plans, conversations, decisions, rather than waiting to be consulted.

He started appreciating her for taking his opinion, and involving him. The honesty of it landed strongly with Nancy, because she had previously been unaware of how she had made Aran irrelevant in the relationship.

Balance in a relationship is not created by one person becoming softer. It is created by one person leaving enough space for the other to become stronger.

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Case 2 | How Kiya and Roy restored balance

2 Sharks in the relationship

Think back to Roy and Kiya from Chapter 7. They had chosen each other for exactly the reason their relationship stopped working after a few years of being together – ambition, speed, certainty. Two Sharks moving at full velocity in the same direction don't cruise together – they collide.

Every conversation between them became a negotiation. Every disagreement became a position to be defended. Neither could yield without feeling they had surrendered something essential. The warmth between them was real. But so was the exhaustion of their marriage with no pause or switch off button.

By the time they sat across from each other in a counsellor's office, both had quietly rehearsed the sentence neither wanted to say out loud. Not because anything catastrophic had happened – there was no betrayal, no single unforgivable fight. It was simpler and, in its own way, sadder: two capable people had run out of ways to be soft with each other.

Kiya had begun mentally pricing out apartments. Roy had stopped bringing things up because he already knew how the conversation would end. This is often how it looks when a marriage between two Sharks nears its edge – not loudly, but through a slow withdrawal of effort, each person privately concluding that the cost of trying has become greater than the cost of leaving.

What saved them was not a single conversation or a single insight. It was smaller than that, and far less cinematic. It was two people deciding, separately, to change one habit each – and then staying with it long enough for the other person to notice.

The counsellor gave both of them six months to try small steps – bringing to light patterns that had become rigid like rocks in their systems.

What Roy changed

Roy noticed he was rarely listening in arguments but instead he was always reloading – waiting for his turn to win. He had carried the Shark successfully into every part of life, especially at work. But at home, the same force made every difference of opinion feel like a threat to his authority.

He made one deliberate change – he stopped answering immediately – he stopped competing. When Kiya expressed an opinion, he practised repeating his understanding before offering his own position. He began asking questions whose answers he never knew - “What is most important to you about this?” “What are you afraid might happen?” At first, the exercise felt artificial, but he stayed with it.

He discovered that beneath many of Kiya’s strong positions, was her softer side – concerns she rarely expressed directly like the fear of losing independence, the need to feel included, the exhaustion of having to fight for equal space in the relationship. Her argument was not always merely about the decision. Sometimes, it was about whether she mattered inside that decision.

Roy started acknowledging Kiya’s softer side – and changed how he responded when conflict escalated between them. Now instead of pushing until he felt he was heard; he now began recognising when the conversation had stopped being constructive. Instead of walking away in anger, he learnt to pause and return to it when both were calmer again. He began practising what he privately called deliberate concession: choosing, once in a conversation, to say 'you might be right' and meaning it. Roy brought in the willingness to leave a question temporarily unresolved and it made him less reactive and more grounded.

What Kiya changed

Kiya's shift required a similar kind of honesty, but a much larger realisation on her part.

She had initially believed that Roy was the more controlling person in the relationship. It was easier to see his force because his style was more direct, louder, and easier to blame. But as she began observing herself, she saw that she often walked into any conversation already braced for a fight that hadn't started yet. The Shark in her did not wait for power to be taken. It claimed power first.

Kiya began noticing how she interpreted disagreement as an attempt to minimise her, trying to show she was capable, independent, and not someone whose opinions could be ignored. She now realised she was fighting battles that were not always taking place – from a space of fear, or complex of not being heard.

Awareness showed her the pattern. And willingness required her to respond differently.

Kiya made a deliberate change: she stopped treating every disagreement as a referendum on her worth. She began asking herself: Is he dismissing me, or does he simply see this differently? Is this a question of respect, or merely a question on which two reasonable people may disagree?

She let him lead in the places where his experience was stronger – which made her feel exposed, and vulnerable at first – but she stayed with that feeling instead of running from it. She stayed with what he said instead of presenting her position first, or preparing her rebuttal while he was still speaking. She also started expressing what she really felt before converting it into an argument. Instead of saying, "Your plan makes no sense," she learnt to say, "I am scared that this decision may reduce my financial independence", or "I feel excluded when you take decisions on your own."

The shift in language changed the quality of Roy's response. Her vulnerability did not make her less powerful. It made her more understandable. She too brought Yin into her power in her own way – openness, emotional honesty, trust, and the ability to receive without immediately resisting.

Over time, their arguments did not disappear, but they were no longer trying to establish who had the stronger case. Instead, they started focusing on finding a solution in which both people remained present. Their silence changed to a feeling of rest, without the exhaustion of resolving, performing, planning, or proving anything every time.

The Sharks did not have to lose their power. They had to increase the Yin in them.

They had to move toward the Owl by being strong without being rigid, clear without becoming controlling, receptive without feeling defeated.

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Case 3 | How Dev and Rhea restored balance

2 Teddy bears in a relationship

They were both Teddy Bears in the relationship. Both gentle, considerate, accommodating, and deeply invested in protecting each other from discomfort.

From the outside, their relationship still appeared peaceful. There were no dramatic arguments, no visible hostility, and no obvious crisis. But inside the relationship a quiet restlessness had begun to grow, where Dev felt stuck in his career while Rhea felt emotionally unseen. There was no friction. But there was also no movement. And no one spoke about their problems.

They had been sitting on a decision to buy a property, for themselves, for years now, with neither of them making the decision to proceed. When they saw their common friend buy that property one day after hearing them talk about it one day, they both were shaken into something they had never felt before – how could someone take a decision so fast, and what had stopped them all these years.

What Dev changed

Dev had always seen his flexibility in decisions as kindness towards Rhea. But he began to realise how often his refusal and dismissal, to choose, which he thought was his consideration, transferred the emotional responsibility of choosing to someone else – on to Rhea alone.

Dev made one deliberate change. He began stating a preference when decisions were being made. Not a final decision but as his preference. He felt selfish in the beginning, but he stayed with it. He began understanding that a relationship could hold two preferences without one person having harmed the other.

Dev also created timelines for decisions. Instead of saying, “We will think about it,” he began saying, “Let us decide by the end of the week.” This small structural change brought decisiveness into areas of their life that had remained indefinitely open. His strength did not appear as aggression, but rather as direction, and a sense of responsibility. He remained considerate, and was now decisive as well.

What Rhea changed

Rhea’s shift was quieter but equally significant.

She had believed that she was easy-going, and adjusting around Dev’s schedule, but underneath a sense of low self-worth had begun accumulating, as she felt herself not challenging herself to speak and decide about anything outside her comfort zone. Rhea began noticing how often she hoped he would understand the needs, and decisions, she had never expressed.

Awareness required her to accept an uncomfortable truth: silence was not communication, even when the love between them was genuine.

She made one deliberate change – she stopped waiting to be understood and started being vocal about her satisfaction and dissatisfaction – instead of saying, “We never do anything,” she said, “I would like us to plan one evening together every week”, or “I need us to talk without phones tonight.” She also stopped rescuing Dev from the discomfort of decision-making. When he said, “Anything is fine,” she did not let the decision hang. She either asked him to choose, or she took the decision herself.

At first, this felt unnecessarily harsh to her. The Teddy Bear in her wanted to make things easy for Dev and her own self. But she began to understand that making everything easy had prevented both of them from developing the courage required to build a life.

Rhea practiced small initiatives – like booking the dinner they had postponed for months, arranging a meeting with a financial adviser to discuss the home they had put on hold for "someday". She did not become forceful. But she became visible – supported by direction, clarity, and self-expression. Her self-worth rose.

As a result, their plans were no longer endlessly discussed. Some were chosen. Dates were set. Decisions were made. Dev applied for a more challenging role in his career. They both moved towards being the Owl through decision, initiative, courage, and direction.

The Teddy Bears did not lose their softness. They gave it purpose.

Their relationship had not been dying from conflict. It had been slowly fading from the absence of it.

A relationship cannot grow only by protecting comfort. It must also be willing to choose, risk, speak, and move.

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Case 4 | How Aditya and Meera restored balance

A strong Shark and a Turtle

This case reads differently because it is a rare case to see.

Aditya was the Shark in the relationship. But over the years his decisions had stopped being contributions and became instructions. Their relationship had reached a dangerous point. His Yang was hardening and had reached a point of excessive domination, narcissism and gas-lighting. As a result, Meera's Yin slipped further into self-erasure.

Their relationship was difficult to resolve with abuse taking a strong turn. But what changed the direction of their relationship was a moment of recognition – not through a conversation, but when their daughter went and told her father that she feared getting married ever, after seeing the way he treated her mother every day. For Aditya, his daughter meant the world. His immediate instinct was to defend himself. The strong Shark in him quickly assembled its case. But he could not fight it with the tears in her eyes. She was naming the truth.

What Aditya changed

For the first time, Aditya heard his behaviour without the justification. He then began to notice how often he used aggression to close a conversation, and how he treated disagreement as disrespect.

Awareness, however, was only the beginning. He made a deliberate change which was a huge step that a person like him could take: he stopped assuming the final call belonged to him by default. Before committing to plans or taking any decision, he started asking Meera for her opinion. He let her speak, he practiced listening without immediately correcting her or forcing his decision, and he began to pause without immediately reacting with anger and aggression.

While his irritation and aggression would rise in impatience, he stayed with the discomfort of it for his daughter.

It cost him something real – his whole identity – which ran on being always right, always in command. Letting go of that felt like losing himself. But he stayed. Slowly, very slowly, his strength changed form.

What Meera changed

Meera's change mattered most for her own recovery, safety and identity.

She had to do something the Turtle finds deeply threatening: to start taking steps to come out of the shell. For years, Meera had felt disagreement of any form to be a danger, and in preserving the relationship she had let go of her self-worth and identity – slipping herself into a shell of silence.

When Aditya gave her space to speak, Meera was scared, but she began practicing with small preferences. She chose what she wanted to do on a Sunday instead of being fine with anything. She declined some social plans that she felt exhausted her, and started participating in household decisions of what to make for meals, and slowly about herself – what to wear, and what to do.

For someone who had equated love with accommodation, setting a boundary initially felt unloving and revolting. She feared Aditya would snap any time. As she saw Aditya give her space, she moved at her own pace, with her safety and independent choices taking priority.

Over time, she discovered that asserting herself did not make her more vulnerable. Instead it made her save her identity, and gave her a spine.

Aditya occasionally returned to instruction when he was under pressure. Meera occasionally slipped back into silence when an argument felt too intense. But they stayed with the change.

Their story carries an important distinction – Aditya and Meera's relationship improved because Aditya stopped needing Meera to be small so he could keep feeling big.

Disclaimer: Not every over-controlling and abusive relationship can be repaired through greater understanding by the person being controlled. Awareness alone does not transform abuse. Promises do not transform it. Temporary softness after an argument does not transform it. Most often than not, abusive relationships are difficult to go through.

The Shark learnt not to overpower. The Turtle learnt to care for itself and not disappear.

And together, they began moving toward the Owl – not perfectly, but consciously. And that consciousness changed what their relationship could become.

What these four cases share

Nancy and Aran. Aditya and Meera. Roy and Kiya. Dev and Rhea.

Different patterns, different relationships, different specific costs. And yet the same underlying dynamic: an energy overused until it crowded out everything else, and a complementary energy left unused until it began to feel like it had never been there at all.

In most cases, restoration began in the same place: awareness – but not awareness alone. Awareness was followed by the willingness of one person to change his/her pattern. The relationship then recalibrated in response.

None of the couples changed or swapped personalities. The strong did not become weak. The gentle did not become aggressive. Each of them switched on what had gone silent in them, and moved, unevenly, imperfectly, towards being the Owl – not as a perfect personality type, but as a more conscious way of responding. They learnt that different moments require different responses. Some moments call for decisiveness. Some call for listening. Some call for direction. Some call for nothing but a pause.

This is what balance in a relationship truly means.

There is also an important boundary within this understanding. Not every relationship can be restored through patience, communication, or greater self-awareness. Where there is coercion, intimidation, repeated humiliation, violence, or control without accountability, the person experiencing harm is not responsible for balancing the relationship. Safety must come before restoration. Change is possible only when the person causing harm recognizes it, accepts responsibility, respects boundaries, and demonstrates consistent change.

The four cases therefore do not offer a formula for saving relationships. They offer a way of seeing one self, and of asking yourself some of these questions:

What role have I repeatedly occupied in my relationship?

What has my partner been required to become in my response?

Which energy do I overuse?

Which energy have I left underdeveloped?

And what might change between us if I brought into the relationship not more of what I already know, but more of what has been missing?

Relationships rarely lose balance in one dramatic moment.

They drift slowly and quietly, and gradually tilt through decisions made by one person, feelings left unspoken by the other, arguments repeatedly won, discomfort repeatedly avoided, and roles repeated until they begin to feel like identity.

And … they are restored in the same way.

Slowly and gradually. Through awareness. Through willingness. Through repeated, conscious acts that allow both people to return to the relationship – not as the Shark, the Teddy Bear, the Turtle, or any fixed version of themselves, but as two whole people capable of strength and softness, action and reflection, independence and connection – as the situation requires.

This leaves us with one question standing.

If two people under one roof can't thrive without both energies in the room – then what happens when an entire company runs on only one?

Its answer is where we go next.

Chapter 10

Restoring balance in Workplaces

Workplace is largely the first environment that makes the cost of imbalance explicit. It is where a person discovers, usually through a combination of feedback, observation, and the slow accumulation of what gets rewarded, that a particular set of qualities is valued in the system – and that the rest should be managed privately, if at all. They are one of the biggest sites of energetic imbalance, and in fact, in most cases, the point at which the tilt towards masculinity starts.

Speed. Decisiveness. Emotional control. Output. These are the currencies of professional advancement in most organisations. The softer qualities that complement them like reflection, empathy, the sensitivity, the capacity to prioritise wellbeing alongside results – are present, if at all, in the language of values statements, but rarely in the room where decisions and perceptions are actually made.

This is not a conspiracy against feminine energies. It is a pattern. Organisations are, usually, built by people who are already running the masculine pattern – who succeeded within a Yang-dominant system, and who, quite naturally, go ahead to build institutions that replicate the conditions of their own success. The system does not intend harm. It automatically perpetuates the imbalance the way all systems perpetuate their own design: by rewarding those who fit it, and making everyone else adapt.

And so they do. As a result, men learn to suppress uncertainty, emotions, and the need for rest, as conditions of being taken seriously. Women too, learn to suppress sensitivity, collaboration, and care for the same reason. Everyone, regardless of gender, eventually learns the same lesson: some of what you are is welcome here, some of it is not, and best is to adapt to the system as soon as you can.

The cost of this type of an organisational pattern is that it accumulates in ways that eventually become undeniable for its employees. Burnout normalised as the price of ambition. Creativity that fades as people learn to produce reliably rather than think originally. Teams that function with precision and connect with no one. Workplaces full of people who are present, performing, but quietly getting depleted – giving the organisation everything it asks for and lose, in this giving, something they do not know and cannot immediately name.

Workplaces do not burn people out because of excessive work.

They burn people out because of adoption of one-sided energy.

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Case 1 | The team that worked, but did not belong

Siddharth led one of the highest-performing teams in the company.

By every metric, that the organisation tracked, the team was exceptional. Targets exceeded. Deadlines met. Clients satisfied. In presentations to senior leadership, his numbers were the ones cited as evidence that the function was working, and the organization's plans were on track.

However, he grappled with one issue throughout – his team never stayed.

Attrition was among the highest in his department. People delivered and then left – quietly, without complaint, often to roles with comparable pressure elsewhere. The exit interviews were careful and polite, saying little. The team conversations were functional and contained, staying strictly within the boundaries of the work.

Siddharth could not understand why his team performed with precision, but left without a note.

The exit interview

Then came a sentence that shifted Siddharth's perspective. In an exit conversation, delivered without accusation by someone who had no reason left to soften it: "We're doing well. But there's no team spirit. No sense of belonging. We're just here to hit numbers and work like machines."

He sat with that sentence for a long time.

Siddharth looked towards his team and noticed people having conversations, but without any connection. There was an exhaustion in the room.

He realized that he too never paused to talk: he was always responding, deciding, pushing. He had built a machine that worked. But he had not built a team that belonged to anything, nor anyone – neither to his department, nor to the company.

What he had built was efficient, but it was not sustainable. The team was operating in a permanent Yang circle of speed, pressure, output, and evaluation – with no corresponding space for the qualities that make work feel meaningful rather than merely productive. No one had been asked what they thought beyond the scope of the immediate task. No one had been permitted to be uncertain. No one had been given the experience of being seen as a person rather than a function.

He understood, for the first time, that this was not a motivation problem or a talent problem. It was a problem of moving in just one direction – his one-sided energy to start with.

The changes he made

Siddharth did not redesign the team's objectives. He redesigned the quality of presence he brought to them.

Meetings, which had previously been structured entirely around updates and decisions, began to include something more: perspective. He started asking questions that had no predetermined correct answer in order to make his team think creatively and talk. What concerns do you have about this direction? What are we not seeing? What would you do differently if the decision were yours? The first few times, the room was quiet with the specific silence of people who are not accustomed to being asked. He stayed with the silence. He waited.

He introduced boundaries – not the ones covered in the company's policy, but as practice modelled from the top. No emails after eight. No weekend expectations without prior notice and genuine necessity.

He was the first to stop sending late-night messages, knowing that as long as he sent them, the team would feel obligated to respond regardless of what any stated policy said.

He began to expand the team's composition – bringing in people with different professional backgrounds, different communication styles, and significantly more women, in roles across the department especially the roles that carried decision-making weight. Not to meet a representation target, but because he had started to recognise that the room's homogeneity was part of what was keeping its thinking narrow.

He created space for men on the team to express doubt and exhaustion without those expressions becoming career-defining. This required him to go first – to say, in a team meeting, that he had found the last quarter genuinely difficult, that he was tired, and that he suspected he was not alone. The room shifted. Something that had been held tightly for a long time began, very cautiously, to release.

What changed

The changes were not immediate and they were not linear. But they were undeniable.

The room softened. Not in weakness. But in honesty. Trust increased. People listened more. Judgement reduced.

The team began to speak differently in meetings – not just about the work, but about what they were observing, what they were uncertain about, what they thought was being missed. Ideas that had previously been processed privately, and deemed too speculative to share, started appearing in conversations. The quality of the team's thinking visibly deepened – not because anyone had become more intelligent, but because the environment had become safe enough for intelligence to fully show up.

Attrition slowed. Then, over two quarters, it stopped. People who had been quietly updating their profiles stopped doing so – not because their work had changed or become easier, but because the experience of the work changed. They were no longer simply deploying their skills in exchange for a salary. They were now a part of something – where they could add meaning and value.

Performance did not decline. It evolved. The team began solving problems at a level of nuance and customer understanding that had not been available to them when they were operating purely on speed and instruction. Decisions became more considered. Errors decreased. The work became interesting, because the team was now genuinely present.

Siddharth did not reduce ambition. He redefined what ambition produces when it operates with awareness rather than pressure. He did not remove structure. He softened it with enough honesty that people could bring their full capacity to it, rather than the carefully managed portion that Yang-only environments typically access.

Creating balance does not mean removing pressure.

It is created by adding dimension – by allowing different energies to coexist, by making space for thought alongside execution, and for the person alongside the performer.

What Siddharth built, eventually, was not just a high-performing team. It was a team that knew why it was performing, that had a shared experience of belonging to something, and brought that experience to the quality of its work.

This is what most organisations are missing. Not talent. Not effort. Not ambition. But the conditions in which all three can fully arrive.

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Case 2 | The leader the system ignored

Roy was not the kind of manager anyone talked about in the corridors.

He did not dominate meetings. He did not arrive at town halls with the practiced energy of someone performing conviction. He did not circulate his team's wins with the particular insistence of a person building a personal brand. He was present, thoughtful, and consistent – and in the specific grammar of the organisation he worked with quietness, and quietness registered as a lack of ambition with them.

He had been at the organisation for eleven years now. But he had been passed over for promotion three times. The feedback, delivered each year with the careful phrasing by management said some version of the same thing every time: excellent on relationships, strong on execution, but not quite projecting the visibility that leadership at the next level requires.

Roy read the feedback every time and never quite understood it. The organisation was telling him, in the only language its performance process knew, that he was not loud enough, not aggressive enough, and not strong enough.

He did not argue. He returned to his team. To him, his achievements and team mattered. But it was now taking a toll on him emotionally.

What his team was producing

While Roy was being passed over, his team was quietly producing results, exceeding expectations every time.

His attrition rate was the lowest in the division. Where other teams hit numbers, Roy's team understood the numbers. Where other teams closed deals, Roy's team built relationships that generated repeat business the organisation had not projected and could not, initially, explain.

In a department where the average tenure of a team member was eighteen months, Roy's people stayed for an average of four years. They did not stay out of inertia. They stayed because the experience of working within his team was qualitatively different from anything most of them had encountered before or would encounter after.

The explanation was straightforward, though it required a framework the organisation did not yet have to express it. Roy led with questions before conclusions. He created space for uncertainty in his team, which made the team more honest about risk. He listened to his people in a way that made them feel the work they were doing was genuinely valued – a contribution they were making to the company they understood and believed in. He noticed when someone was carrying more than they were saying, and he asked about it, and he adjusted the load before the person broke rather than after.

He also held his team to high standards with empathy and praise for every target achieved. He was not indulgent. He was not soft in the sense of being unwilling to hold a position or deliver difficult feedback. He was demanding in the way that the best teachers are demanding: because he believed in what his people were capable of and was unwilling to let them settle for less.

The team knew this. It was part of why they stayed.

The decision no one saw coming

The third passed-over promotion was the last for Roy.

Roy did not make a scene. That was not who he was. He was quiet, but he was not passive. He was considerate, but he was not without conviction. And after eleven years of delivering results that the organisation consistently acknowledged in the appraisal meeting and consistently overlooked in the promotion decision, he had reached the particular clarity that arrives when a person has been patient long enough to know that his patience will not be rewarded.

He had watched the people who had been promoted ahead of him. He had noted the style of leadership they practiced and the results it produced. He had drawn his own conclusions quietly, without bitterness, observing something carefully for a long time.

He updated his resume over a weekend. He sent it to three organisations in the same sector whose leadership he had observed and respected. Within six weeks, he had an offer. He accepted it and tendered his resignation the next morning. Politely. In writing, with no expressed grievance. He placed it on his manager's desk and returned to his team.

What the resignation revealed

The response from his immediate manager was careful and professional. A meeting was requested. Appreciation was expressed. The standard language of retention conversations was deployed. Roy listened politely and conveyed that he was not looking to negotiate, and had decided to move on.

What happened next was not something he had calculated, though he had, perhaps, not been entirely surprised by it.

The team's response to his resignation was immediate. Not a revolt and nothing so dramatic. It was the specific quality of stillness that moves through a team when the person who has been holding its culture together announces they are leaving. People who had been productive became quieter. Two of his strongest performers, within days of the announcement, requested one-to-one conversations with HR that had nothing to do with their work.

One of them submitted her own resignation within a fortnight. Her exit interview, unlike the careful and managed ones the organisation usually received, was unusually direct. She said: Roy was the reason she stayed. Without him, she was not sure what the leadership will have to offer.

A second team member gave notice the following week with a similar exit interview.

The function, which had been the organisation's most stable in terms of attrition and one of its most consistent in terms of performance, was beginning to unravel. In a span of three weeks, it had moved from being the quietest team in the building to the most urgent people problem on the HR director's desk.

When HR finally read the numbers

The HR director pulled Roy's file.

What she found there was not a surprise, exactly. But reading it in the context of what was happening to the team, with the specific attention of someone trying to manage a crisis now, rather than an appraisal process, it now looked different from how it had looked in the annual appraisal rounds, where it had been reviewed and filed and not acted upon.

Three consecutive years of performance ratings that exceeded expectations, not by a small margin, and not in easy conditions. In each of those years, Roy's team had not only met its targets. It had exceeded them. In each of those years, the performance review had noted his results, described his leadership positively, and recommended him for recognition. In each of those years, the promotion decision had gone elsewhere.

The HR director looked at the attrition data alongside the performance data. She looked at the client satisfaction scores attached to his function. She looked at the engagement survey results from his team, and found it was higher than any comparable function in the building.

Then she looked at the three promotion decisions that had been made in the cycles where Roy had been passed over. She looked at the performance of the leaders who had been selected. She compared their teams' attrition, their clients' satisfaction scores, their people's engagement levels.

The comparison was not flattering to the decisions that had been made.

She brought the data to the Chief Executive, placed the numbers on the table and let them speak.

Too late, Too little

The organisation moved quickly once the Chief Executive, and HR had made their notes. Roy was called in. The management sat across from him and accepted what they had ignored. They reached a conclusion they should have reached much earlier. They had missed something. Repeatedly. They asked whether he would consider staying, in a role that finally reflects what his contribution had actually been worth.

The offer on the table was the promotion he had been passed over for three times. Immediate. With a formal acknowledgement, placed in his personnel file.

Roy listened to all of it. He appreciated their decision, but apologised for not accepting their offer.

He was not cold when he said it. He was neither triumphant nor loud. He was the same person he had always been – measured, clear, composed and without the performance of emotion in either direction. He thanked the management for the conversation and for the honesty it had finally contained. He said he hoped the organisation would carry what it had learned into how it evaluated the people who remained. He stood, shook hands, and left.

What the organization lost with him

In the weeks that followed Roy's departure, the scale of what had left with him became even more visible.

Of the nine people who had formed the core of his team, six followed him to the new organisation within four months. They did not coordinate a walkout – there was no meeting, no pact, no collective decision announced.

They each made individual choices, in their own time, for their own reasons. But the reason, in each case, was the same: they had experienced a particular quality of working environment under Roy's leadership and had assessed that they were unlikely to find it again in the organisation they were leaving.

They brought with them years of accumulated client knowledge, relationship capital that had taken the team a decade to build, and the specific institutional memory that lives not in systems or documents but in people who have been paying careful attention for a long time. The organisation that had hired Roy found that what arrived with him was considerably more than one leader.

What arrived was a team.

Back at the original organisation, the impact was immediate. Several clients, accustomed to the quality of responsiveness and considered engagement that had been a function of the team's culture rather than any individual within it, found the transition difficult. Some reduced their contract tenure, while others moved entirely to the firm Roy had joined.

The Chief Executive, reviewing the impact assessment three months after his departure, said something that was not minuted but circulated widely in the floors below: we did not lose a manager. We lost a culture. And we spent eleven years not understanding that the two were the same thing.

The lesson the organisation learnt the hard way

The organisation commissioned a review. It examined its promotion criteria, its performance evaluation framework, and the attributes it had been selecting for in its leadership pipeline. What the review found was more than eye opening revealation to the management: a consistent pattern of rewarding visibility, assertiveness, and individual delivery metrics, while giving no formal weight to the quality of environment a leader created, the rate at which people developed under their leadership, or the sustainability of the results they produced.

The framework was revised. New criteria were introduced. Managers were asked, for the first time as a formal part of the appraisal process, to account for the attrition within their teams, the engagement of their people, and the degree to which the talent beneath them was growing.

Roy, by himself, had not needed a review to understand what good leadership meant. He had been practising it, without recognition, for more than a decade. The organisation had needed a crisis — the departure of a team, the loss of clients, the visible unravelling of its most stable function — to arrive at conclusions the evidence had been offering it for years.

And by the time it arrived at those conclusions, the person who had embodied them most completely was already building something better, elsewhere, with the people who had chosen to follow him.

The organisation had not failed to see Roy's results.

It had failed to understand what those results were evidence of. And by the time it understood, the evidence had walked out of the building, and taken six other star performers, four years of client relationships, and an irreplaceable quality of culture with it.

This is the cost that organisations rarely calculate because it accumulates quietly and reveals itself only when recovery is expensive. It is not the cost of a bad hire or a failed project. It is the cost of a system that has been measuring the wrong things for so long that it mistakes loudness for leadership, and discovers, only when the quiet performing ones leave, that what it called leadership had never been producing what it most needed.

It took a disruptive act from the most undisruptive person in the building for the organisation to understand what it had been missing.

And by the time it understood, what it had been missing, that person had already left along with the best of what the organisation built with it.

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Case 3 | Everything the system asked for, and what it cost her

Noor had done everything right.

Twenty-two years at the organisation. Three divisions led, aggressive, strong, decisive, loud and a performer. A reputation for execution that was, among the people who tracked these things, essentially uncontested. She sat on the board of a leading industry association. She had, by every measure her organisation had ever used to evaluate its senior leadership, earned the right to be in the conversation for the top role.

The outgoing CEO had personally recommended her to the board as part of the succession planning process. The organisation's future was, in many minds, already settled.

Noor believed this too. She had spent twenty-two years proving herself within a system that had consistently confirmed she was correct to do

so. She had no reason to believe the final step would be different from all the steps that had preceded it.

She was wrong. Not about her achievement. About what the top role required.

The two contenders

The board had identified two internal candidates. Noor was one. The other was a woman named Priya – younger, less tenured, with a slightly shorter record of large-scale P&L responsibility. By the conventional metrics of any succession criteria, experience and aggression, Noor was the stronger candidate. She knew this. The organisation knew this. The comparison of achievements, performance and teams, on the other hand, was close between the two.

The board ran a process more rigorous than anyone had anticipated. Alongside the formal presentations, the financial reviews, and the strategic vision sessions, the board's advisors conducted structured conversations with a much wider group of stakeholders than the standard succession process would reach. Not just the executive committee. Not just the people who attended the same meetings as the candidates. But middle managers, high-potential talent from two levels below the executive floor, long-standing clients, cross-functional peers who had worked alongside both women, across different periods and different contexts.

The board was not looking for gossip. It was looking for a specific piece of information that the standard process, focused almost entirely on what a leader had achieved, was not designed to surface: what was it like to be led by this person? What did the people around her experience as the quality of her presence in their working lives?

The answers arrived over three weeks of conversations. The board read them carefully.

About Priya, the language was consistent across every level and every context. People described feeling that their development mattered to her, they felt safe in her meetings that allowed genuine disagreement rather

than the managed consensus that most meetings produce, she knew who they were – not just what they did. That her attention was real rather than performed.

About Noor, the language was different.

No one questioned her capability. No one doubted her results. The words used to describe her were consistent – decisive, demanding, formidable, exceptional under pressure – words of respect, and they were meant as such. But when the conversations moved from what she had achieved to what it had been like to work under her, a pattern emerged.

Her teams delivered. But they did not feel known. Her standards were high and consistently enforced, but the investment in the people being held to them was thin. Recognition, when it came, came in relation to output and rarely in relation to the person who had produced it, the effort it had required, or the growth it represented. People in her teams performed. But what they did not do, consistently and across the divisions she had led over two decades, was bring the full range of what they were capable of, to the table. The gap between what her teams produced and what they might have produced in a different environment was not visible in the numbers. It was visible to the people themselves, many of whom had left, and some of whom, in the privacy of the board's conversations, said so.

The attrition figures from her three divisions told a story she had never been asked to account for. People left early. They left, overwhelmed and exhausted. The exit interview language, across divisions and across time, had a particular consistency: professionally stretched, personally invisible. High standards, low belonging.

The organisation had accepted the attrition as a feature of high-performance environments and had directed its attention to replacing the people who left rather than understanding why they did.

The Board's decision

The board selected Priya.

The formal communication was careful and generous – acknowledging Noor's extraordinary contribution, the significance of her candidacy, the genuine weight of the decision. It said, between the considered lines, that the board had identified in Priya qualities what it believed were essential for the organisation's next chapter. It did not specify what those qualities were.

The specification came in a private conversation with the board chair. They had no doubt about the results delivered by her. But what the Board needed in its next leader was someone who could produce results and who created, in the producing of them, an environment where the people inside it felt that they belonged. Priya's record was shorter. Her numbers were smaller. But the people who had worked under her described something the Board was not able to find in the descriptions of Noor's leadership. They described feeling that they mattered – not just as departments, not just as functions of the outcome, but as people who were genuinely known and genuinely invested in. They felt loyal towards their work and the company.

Noor listened to all of this without interruption. She thanked him, gathered her things, and left.

The drive home

She sat in the car for a long time before starting the engine.

She was not thinking about Priya. She was not thinking about the Board's decision, which she would, with time, come to understand as correct. She was thinking about something more specific and more uncomfortable: the faces of the people who had worked for her over twenty-two years, and how many of them she could bring to mind with any clarity.

She tried. She thought of names. But the faces, the specific human beings behind the quarterly reviews and the attrition statistics and the exit interview summaries she had received and processed and filed – these were harder to reach. They had passed through her divisions like water through a channel: where the water itself, the individual people, had not left much of a mark.

She thought about a team meeting where a young manager had presented work that she had found as genuinely original. She had acknowledged the output. But she could not remember whether she had acknowledged the person or his name.

She thought about the attrition data the Board had referenced. She now thought about it not as a statistic but as people. She had never thought of it that way. The organisation had not asked her to. She had optimised for the replacements but not as a learning about the environment she had created.

The Board had read that data differently. And in their reading, she could see something she had not been able to see from inside her own career: a pattern that had been present across all three of her divisions, consistent and unmistakeable, once you knew what you were looking at. Not a pattern of failure. But a pattern of incompleteness.

She had built careers for herself. She had not, with any consistency, built them for others.

The understanding did not arrive as a single realisation. It arrived over days, in fragments, each one slightly more uncomfortable than the last.

She understood that she had been shaped, with extraordinary precision, by the organisation she had entered twenty-two years earlier. It had asked her to be decisive, so she had been decisive. It had asked her to deliver results, so she had delivered results. It had rewarded her visibility, her confidence, her capacity to hold a position under pressure and move fast without apparent hesitation. At every stage, she had given the organisation what it asked for, and the organisation had confirmed, at every stage, that she was right to do so.

What the organisation had never asked her for explicitly, was the development of the qualities the Board had just told her the top role required. Empathy. Sensitivity. Genuine curiosity about the people around her. The ability to create an environment in which the people were as visible as their performance. The understanding that people who feel known bring more than people who feel managed.

These were not qualities she lacked by nature. But she had learned, early and thoroughly, that these qualities were personal. That they belonged at home. That the workplace was a different context with different rules, and that the rules of the workplace had no formal category for the human being alongside the performer. The system had built her into a version of what it valued – the output. It had then arrived at the moment of its highest reward and told her that what it actually needed was something it had never asked her to develop.

This, she understood, was not simply her failure. It was the system's – a system that had been selecting and rewarding one set of qualities, while a different set of qualities that produced better long-term outcomes had been accumulating in the data no one had thought to read to her.

She was, in some sense, the most complete expression of what the system produced: a leader of extraordinary capability and genuine incompleteness, shaped by an organisation that had not known what it was shaping her away from.

The pattern the Board had identified was her pattern, produced by her choices, even if those choices had been made within a system that encouraged them.

She had not been failing for twenty-two years.

She had been succeeding at the wrong examination. And no one, not the organisation, not the succession of managers who had praised and promoted her, had told her that another examination was being prepared.

What changed

Noor did not leave the organization.

She had not run from difficult things in twenty-two years. She was not going to begin at fifty-one, in the aftermath of the most difficult professional moment of her life.

She returned to her division. She led it, as she had always led it, with precision and commitment and the standards that had always been hers. The results probably did not change.

But what changed was smaller and, in its smallness, harder than anything she had previously attempted.

She began to learn the names – not of the direct reports she had always known, but of the people two levels below her. The managers whose work she reviewed but whose faces she had never registered. She began to ask, in one-to-ones, questions she had not previously thought to ask.

Not about deliverables. About the person. What they were finding difficult. What they were proud of that had not appeared in any report. What they wanted from the next two years of their career and whether the current role was giving it to them.

She stayed with the uncertainty that the teams showed to the questions. She asked again month after month. Slowly, the quality of conversations changed. People began to speak with more honesty. It was not dramatic. It was the specific, incremental quality of trust arriving in a space where it had not previously been permitted.

She noticed, and she kept going.

She could not become CEO. That moment had passed. But the leader she was becoming – the one who combined the formidable capability she had always carried with the quality of human attention she had always been capable of and had spent twenty-two years not applying – was a more complete leader than the one who had walked into the board's succession process.

The system had produced an exceptional and incomplete version of her. She was, at fifty-one, now doing what the system had never asked her to do: producing the rest.

In the next few years, Noor landed a bigger role: Head of Asia-Pacific. The Board had always admired her capabilities, and she made them admire the true leader in her as well.

Achievement without empathy builds careers.
Empathy without achievement builds goodwill.

But achievement with empathy – this is what builds organisations that people choose to belong to.

And leaders that people choose to follow.

The Pattern across all three cases

Siddharth. Roy. Noor.

Three leaders. Three different relationships with the same system. Three outcomes that, read together, tell a story the system itself has never quite been willing to tell about itself.

Siddharth's case is the most hopeful of the three. It shows that the system can be interrupted from within – that a single leader, willing to examine what they have built and add what is missing, can change the quality of an entire team's experience without dismantling the ambition that drove the building of it.

But Siddharth's case also carries a quiet caution. He changed because an exit conversation reached him at the right moment. What about the leaders it does not reach? What about the teams whose honest voices leave without being heard, whose sentences are absorbed as attrition data and filed rather than as information that demands a response?

Siddharth was fortunate that the feedback arrived before the damage became irreversible; and he was a person who was capable of sitting with honesty rather than managing it, and therefore things changed in his case. But many organisations are not that fortunate, many leaders do not still bother, and many leaders are never given the sentence that opens the door.

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Roy's case is harder and more instructive.

He did not need to change for the organisation which was not willing to see real leadership. He was doing the right things but at the wrong place.

It took a resignation to make the organisation look at what it had been looking at without seeing. He left. He took his team. He took his clients. And the organisation sat with the aftermath of his departure and was forced, finally, to ask the question it should have asked a decade earlier: what had it actually been measuring, and what had those measurements been missing?

His case is the most costly of the three – costly for the organisation, which paid in real and visible ways for its long-running failure of perception. And it carries the heaviest lesson: that the damage done by a system that consistently overlooks its best people is not always reversible. Sometimes the correction comes too late. Sometimes the proof simply walks out of the building, and what the system learns from it is learned in the aftermath of a loss it cannot fully recover from.

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Noor's case sits between the other two in a way that makes it the most complex.

She was not, like Siddharth, a leader who had disconnected from the people around her through oversight or habit. She was a leader who had been systematically shaped, by twenty-two years of consistent reinforcement, into an exceptionally capable version of what the system valued – and at the same time, an incomplete version of what leadership at the highest level actually requires.

The deepest injustice in Noor's case is not that she lost the CEO role.

It is that the system which shaped her into someone who would lose it never once asked her, in twenty-two years, to develop what it then penalised her for lacking. It rewarded exactly what it produced and then expressed disappointment at what the production had cost.

What changed in Noor's favour in the end, was not the system, not the organization, but her perseverance, her ambition, her willingness to learn, and her ability to evolve what was missing in her.

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Three leaders. Three versions of the same failure – not theirs, but the organisation's.

A system that rewarded performance and called it leadership, that overlooked connection and called it irrelevance, that produced exceptional people and incomplete ones simultaneously, and rarely asked which of those it was doing.

These three cases are not exceptional. They are representative. There are Siddharthas in every organisation who are capable, driven leaders who have built teams according to the system's demands and who know what building them has cost.

There are Roys in every organisation who are balanced, effective leaders whose results are sitting in spreadsheets no one has yet read with the right question in mind. And then there are Noors in every organisation who are high achievers shaped so precisely by the system, that they reach its highest levels carrying exactly what it cultivated, and missing exactly what it never thought to ask for.

The system is not malicious. That is perhaps the most important thing to understand about it. The people within it – the managers who passed over Roy, the appraisal panels that rewarded Noor's Yang and never asked about her Yin, the organisation that built Siddharth's framework and called its output success – none of them intended the outcomes these cases describe. They were simply operating in the system, within a set of assumptions so deeply embedded in them, that they stop being visible as something that can be altered. They simply exist, as requirements for leadership and success.

The question this chapter leaves is a simple one, and it belongs to every organisation reading it: does there have to be a loss? Does recognition have to arrive in the aftermath of departure? Does the system have to fail visibly before it is willing to examine the assumptions that produced the failure?

Or is it possible to build organisations that read their Roys before they resign? That develop their Noors before the board has to explain what is missing? That give their Siddharthas the sentence they need before someone has already decided to leave?

The answer is yes. The answer has always been yes. But what it simply requires is the willingness to ask a different question. Not: is this person delivering what we measure? But: is this person building something that will last? Not: does this leader project the presence we recognise as authority? But: do the people around this leader feel that their presence is recognised?

These are not softer questions. They are harder ones. They require more of the organisation asking them, more of the managers answering them, and more of the systems designed to process the answers.

The organisations that begin to ask these questions will not just retain their best people. They will become the kind of places that people actively choose to build their careers within.

The cost of imbalance in workplaces is not only human. It is strategic.

And the organisations that understand this first will not just be better places to work in. They will simply be better.

From Workplaces to the World

What these three cases reveal at the level of the organisation is a version of the same pattern this book has been tracing since its opening pages. The individual who runs only on Yang produces and depletes. The individual whose Yin is never recognised produces and disappears. The individual who arrives with both qualities and is shaped into only one produces, succeeds, but remains incomplete.

Scale the individual to a team. Scale the team to an organisation. Scale the organisation to a society. Scale the society to a nation.

The pattern does not change. Only the stakes do.

The chapters that follow move to that wider stage. To societies and the collective patterns that either sustain or erode the quality of life within them. To nations and the leadership models that shape them. And to the question of whether what is possible in a team, in a division, in a single organisation willing to revise its assumptions, is also possible at the scale of the world.

The answer this book intends to make is: yes. But it begins here. In a person. In a choice. In the willingness to ask whether what we are building is actually worth what it is costing the people who are building it with us.

Chapter 11

Restoring Balance in the World

The pattern we saw in the workplace does not stop at the office door, nor are they only workplace phenomena. They are expressions of something that runs through every level of our collective human life.

Scale it to a society, a nation, a world. The energy patterns remain the same. Only the consequences grow larger, and the cost of not addressing them grows harder to absorb.

This chapter traces that scaling. It begins where most of us live – in our daily life in the communities around us – and then moves outward to the level where the pattern becomes most consequential: the decisions made by nations, and the leadership that shapes the world.

It goes on to ask the next question: what does restoration look like at that scale? Can one person, one community, one city begin asking different questions? Is restoration even possible at all?

What does Collective Imbalance look like

A society is not separate from the people within it. It is a reflection of them – of what they carry privately and what they build collectively, of what attributes they reward in their institutions, and what those institutions teach the next generation to value. And when an entire society begins to lean in one direction then the imbalance that individual people carry, becomes all pervasive. It becomes collective.

What is being built today is not difficult to read and feel – It is visible in the cities that are always constructing and never quite maintaining – where new infrastructure is celebrated while existing infrastructure is allowed to decay, where the speed of development is the metric but the quality of life within what has been developed is measured by no one.

It is visible in education systems that rank children against each other from their youngest years, that have sophisticated frameworks for measuring academic performance and no framework at all for measuring a child's capacity for empathy, collaboration, or the ability to disagree without diminishing.

It is visible in public cultures where busyness has become the primary social currency, where a person who says they are overwhelmed with work is read as important, and a person who says they are rested is read with mild suspicion of being less important.

It is visible in the streets that empty early, not because people want to be indoors, but because the quality of presence in shared public spaces has been eroded by decades of collective inattention. In the way women calculate the safety of a route before walking it, measuring their freedom in the distance between streetlights. In the way elders watch from balconies the streets they once inhabited freely, but now look unfamiliar – finding them changed not physically but with the feeling – or absence of it – of being welcome within it any more.

None of this is inevitable. All of it is the accumulated result of our choices at individual, institutional, political levels, made by systems optimising for one kind of output with no recognition for measuring what they were not tracking.

A society that only expands but does not maintain is not progressing.

It is compensating.

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Case | A City that chose to ask a different question

For nearly two decades, the city had been growing by every measure any one would apply.

New highways extended its reach. Glass towers multiplied along its skyline. Infrastructure projects were announced regularly and celebrated as evidence of momentum. The minister responsible was frequently photographed at inauguration ceremonies with the visible architecture of progress. The city looked to be developing rapidly.

By the metrics the government tracked, the city was thriving. By the metrics no one was tracking, it was in trouble.

Commute times had increased every year for eight years, the statistic reported was the kilometres of new road built, and the hours of human life consumed by the traffic on them. Green cover had declined by thirty percent over the decade, but the figure in reports was the increase in commercial floor space.

People moved faster. But spoke less. Homes became bigger. But felt emptier. Children stayed indoors. Neighbours did not know each other. The streets emptied early. Women had learned, that public space after dark was not reliably safe - and had reorganised their lives accordingly, arriving home earlier, declining invitations, measuring their freedom in the distance between streetlights, and by the length of their clothes. Older residents who had once walked to the market in the evening had stopped. Not from incapacity, but because the streets were now unfamiliar with unwanted elements. Rates of anxiety and reported loneliness had been rising steadily, measured nowhere officially, but felt everywhere personally.

The city was building. But it had forgotten, in that building, to ask who it was building for.

No one recognised it as an imbalance. But everyone felt it.

The shift begins

The change did not begin with any policy change.

It began with a question. A small group of residents asked at a community gathering town hall which had some prominent society and political figures as well: *What are we building, if it cannot be preserved?*

The room was quiet in the way that rooms go quiet when something has been said that everyone recognises and no one has yet found the words for to answer.

The question spread like wild fire – not through any formal channel, but in the way that honest questions spread when they have been waiting to be asked: person to person, neighbourhood to neighbourhood, from resident associations to local municipalities to the office of a deputy mayor who had been sitting with a quieter version of the same question for two years without a context in which to place it.

What changed

The city began conducting liveability audits and surveys not of infrastructure output but of lived experience, asking residents specific questions about whether they felt safe walking at night, whether they knew their neighbours, whether the pace of their daily life left any room for rest. The results were not flattering. They were honest. And honesty, in a system that had been measuring the wrong things for two decades, was the necessary beginning.

The mayor, himself an enthusiast and patron of transformation and change, started implementing measures across the city. Public spaces were restored – not with the ceremony of new construction, but with the quieter investment of maintenance and attention. Parks and gardens got more space and attention – not as decoration, but as gathering spaces. Streets got better lit for safety rather than for show. Police presence got redirected toward the streets where ordinary people, and particularly women, had been learning to make themselves smaller.

The city still grew. New construction continued, and the skyline kept changing. But there was now more that had been added to its understanding of what it was trying to do: the intention to also hold, to also maintain and preserve, to ask of each new thing being built – who does this serve, what is the cost of constructing it, and will the people find something that makes their lives worth living?

Nothing extraordinary had changed. No grand transformation. Only one shift in perspective: From expansion alone. To expansion with care. From building more, to also preserving what mattered.

A society does not become balanced by stopping growth. It becomes balanced by integrating care into growth.

Progress is not only what we build. It is what we protect, maintain, and restore.

A society that asks only the first question and never the second is not advancing. It is accumulating, and eventually risks being buried under what it has accumulated.

From the Street to the World

What happened in that city is not a local story. It is a pattern and the same pattern, operating at larger and more consequential scales, determines the quality of life not just in one neighbourhood but across societies and between nations.

The residents who asked the question in the community hall reintroduced Yin into a Yang-dominant system. Not by opposing the growth, but by asking what the growth was missing.

What the preceding chapters have demonstrated at the individual, relational, and organisational level is equally true at the societal and national level. Yang without Yin does not produce flourishing output. It produces results in the short term and depletion in the long term.

What we see in the world today is not random chaos. It is the same imbalance – the one traced from inside an individual, through their relationships and workplaces – that has scaled and translated to its most consequential expression into the world.

At a global level, Yang overdrive shows up as aggression between nations, as power struggles that produce wars, as the exploitation of both people and environments by systems that have learned to treat everything as a resource to extract rather than a living system to sustain. Nations operating from excessive Yang consistently prioritise dominance over dialogue, control over cooperation, expansion over preservation. They measure strength by what they can overpower, and success by what they can accumulate.

But beneath the performance of that strength, there is the presence of a huge insecurity – an attempt to prove, to dominate, to validate, to own more. The nations that are most loudly assertive are frequently the ones most anxious and fearful about their position. The leaders who reach most quickly for force are often the ones that are least comfortable with the questions that dialogue would require them to sit with. The aggression is real and its consequences are devastating. But it is driven not by strength in its truest form but by the specific restlessness of power that is constantly being demonstrated.

Nations do not always collide because people seek war.

They collide because leadership, operating from the position of imbalance, chooses it, and calls the choosing – strength.

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What Nations actually want

Look beyond governments, into the people who live within them, and the picture is different.

People do not wake up wanting conflict. They want safety for their children, dignity in their work, communities where belonging is possible, and the kind of stability that allows them to invest in something beyond immediate survival. Societies do not crave destruction. Left to their own daily choices most people tend toward care rather than aggression, and toward connection rather than isolation.

The imbalance that we see in the world is not just a systemic randomness. It is chosen. And the responsibility of this choice does not rest only with those who lead. It rests also with those who choose the leadership, and the qualities they want in their leaders – what a society celebrates, what it admires, what it teaches its children to recognise as strength. If we celebrate loudness, we will be led by it. If we admire development without care, we will experience its consequences across every level of our shared life. But if we begin to value balance – if we start to see wisdom, empathy, and respect as forms of strength rather than departures from it – then the character of our leadership will, over time, reflect that shift.

Leadership does not exist above the culture that produces it. It emerges from it. The leader who rises is the leader whose qualities the system has been quietly teaching people to recognise and reward. Change what the system teaches, and over time, the leaders it produces will change.

Restoring balance at the level of nations is not about weakening strength. It is about redefining what strength is.

It means valuing dialogue as much as defense and understanding that the capacity to hold a difficult conversation is not a concession of power, but one of its most sophisticated expressions.

It means measuring national progress not only through military capability and economic output but through the wellbeing of the people those systems were built to serve: their health, their safety, their sense of belonging, the quality of their daily lives. It requires leaders to develop the capacity to pause, to listen, to consider the long view, and to treat the quality of human life as a primary objective rather than a by-product of economic growth.

It means treating the environment not as a resource to be extracted at the pace that short-term economic models prefer, but as a living system whose health is inseparable from the health of the societies depending on it. It means asking, of every major national decision: what are we building and what are we destroying in the building of it?

What we need is not just stronger leadership. We need balanced leadership – leaders, whether men or women, who can hold both energies. Who can act, but also pause. Who can decide, but also listen. Who understand that strength is not in domination, but in responsibility. And politics is not power, but protection, and not only clarity, but compassion as well.

The nations that have moved furthest in this direction – however imperfectly, however partially – are not the weakest on the world stage. They are frequently among the most trusted, the most diplomatically effective, and the most genuinely secure places where people feel safe and happy living.

The ability to protect life is a greater strength than the ability to overpower others.

This is not idealism. It is a pattern that the evidence of modern diplomatic history consistently supports.

Returning to the Nations we met at the beginning

At the beginning of this book, the United States and India sat across from two journalists and spoke, perhaps more honestly than nations usually do.

The United States carried the exhaustion of remaining powerful among all nations – the fear that if it softened, paused, or loosened its control, someone else would take its place. India carried the burden of proving progress to its people – the belief that slowing down to protect its people, its rivers, its air, and its older wisdom might cost it the recognition it had worked so hard to earn. One was trapped by the weight of power. The other by the weight of progress. Neither lacked strength. What they lacked was the freedom to use anything other than the strength that was defined for them.

This chapter takes the conversations by exploring what restoration for these countries might look like. Just as the imbalanced relationships cannot change by reducing one energy in order to rise the other, similarly nations cannot restore balance by abandoning power, ambition, growth, or action. Instead, they must bring back all the qualities that were pushed out of their system in the pursuit of them – reflection alongside speed, empathy alongside strategy, preservation alongside expansion, and human well-being alongside economic achievement.

The answer, therefore, is not for the United States to become less powerful or for India to stop progressing. It is for power to recover its wisdom, and for progress to remember its purpose.

Let's explore what will happen when balance is not merely encouraged in those who govern, but deliberately built into the architecture through which they govern?

To explore that possibility, let us return to both the United States, and India, again – but this time, not as nations trying to defend their power, or development, but as nations willing, for the first time, to experiment with another way of holding power, and defining development.

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The experiment | A Hypothetical case for our Fractured World

Elections in the United States: First country to elect Two Presidents

The United States is the world's oldest continuous democracy. A nation that was built on the language of freedom, equality, and the idea that governance should serve the people rather than overpower them. It is also a nation that, in more than two centuries of that democracy, has never elected a woman to its highest office.

This is not coincidence. It is a signal, about the kind of power that the system has been selecting for, and about the qualities it has, for two centuries, pushed aside in its leaders.

Consider a thought experiment – not a prediction, not a policy proposal, but an invitation to imagine a different architecture of power.

What if the United States chose to do something unprecedented?

What if it elected two Presidents?

The Election: The Experiment

The constitution is amended. The world watches. Curious. Sceptical. Uncertain.

This time, the electorate does not just vote for policies. It votes for energies. Two co-presidents, elected together, governing together – not as a coalition of convenience or a compromise reached in a deadlock, but as a deliberately designed balance. Each representing contrasting but complementary energies.

One bringing the qualities Yang leadership has always carried: national security, economic strategy, decisive execution, the capacity to act with speed and clarity when they are required.

The other bringing what has been consistently excluded from the room: long-term thinking, diplomatic empathy, the health and education of the population, the question of what kind of nation it is building itself into and at what cost.

They do not divide the government between them. They govern together, bringing both questions to every significant decision. Not: what action is required? But: what action is required, and what will it create in the lives of the people it touches?

They do not always agree. That is not the point. The point is that the disagreement is built into the structure of the decision-making itself, rather than being resolved in advance by a system that has already decided which half of the question matters.

What changed

Strength remains. With 2 presidents, the nation, with the world's largest military and the world's largest economy, does not cease to be powerful because it has introduced reflection into its governance. Instead, it becomes more capable of distinguishing between the situations that require force and the situations that require responding with the appropriate energy, rather than defaulting to the only energy the previous system knew how to use.

Defence continues, but so does diplomacy, treated not as a softer alternative to real power but as one of its most sophisticated expressions. Economic growth continues, but alongside it, a measure of what that growth is producing in the actual lives of the people inside the economy. Internationally, conflicts are approached with the full range of available tools – strategy, but also dialogue, long-term relationship building, and the willingness to consider what the other side needs, rather than only what can be extracted from the confrontation.

The most significant shift was not political. It was cultural and psychological. Communities, and people began to change. Emotional intelligence was no longer dismissed. Community, warmth, and family ties got more importance.

Depression rates reduced. Rest was no longer weakness. Boundaries were no longer considered resistance. People looked at health differently. People began to see strength differently. That strength could listen, authority could pause, and leadership could care. And that progress could include well-being.

The United States did not stop being powerful.
It stopped needing to prove itself.

And in that shift: from power performed – to power held with wisdom, the World witnessed what it had never seen before: what leadership looks like when it is no longer afraid of its own complexity.

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Redefined development

Two leaders in India: From - create at scale, to - care at scale

Imagine a similar case in India.

Not two Prime Ministers fighting for authority, nor one governing while the other waits for a turn – but two leaders deliberately entrusted with holding two dimensions of development at the same time.

One carries the India already in motion: economic growth, infrastructure, technology, national security, industrial expansion, investment and the ability to execute at enormous scale.

The other carries what rapid development too-easily leaves behind: public health, education, clean air and water, restoration of rivers, women's safety, civic spaces, environmental preservation, maintenance, and the quieter question of whether growth is actually improving everyday life.

They do not divide India and *Bharat* between them. They govern them together, as one.

Every major project must now survive two questions:

What will this build? And: what will this sustain?

The India that had spent decades proving that it could create at scale would begin proving something more difficult and critical – that it could care at scale – setting an example to the depleting world.

Perhaps its greatest transformation would be psychological.

Cleanliness would stop being someone else's responsibility. Maintenance would stop being less glamorous than creation. Preservation would stop appearing anti-development. And care – for a river, a road, a neighbourhood, a woman's dignity, a senior's care, or a child breathing the city's air – would become as legitimate a measure of national strength as GDP.

India would not have to choose between Silicon Valley and the Himalayas after all.

It could learn to hold both.

Why these cases matter beyond the hypothetical

These cases may never happen in this exact form. The political, constitutional, and cultural distance between where the world currently is and where this scenario imagines it going, is quite considerable.

But the point these cases raise is critical – if imbalance at the top creates imbalance everywhere else, why do we continue to design power as a singular, one-directional system, and build it entirely around the qualities that Yang overdrive produces and rewards?

The answer may not necessarily be two leaders. But it is definitely, a balanced leadership – whether in one person who has developed the full range of what governance requires, or in systems deliberately designed to hold both energies in the room where decisions are made. A president and a cabinet composed to represent the full spectrum of what a nation needs. A parliament whose structure ensures that the long view is as audible as the short-term. A governance culture in which empathy is not a personal virtue of individual leaders but a structural expectation of the system itself.

These are not utopian ideas. They are design questions.

Every governance system is designed. The question is only whether it is designed with awareness of what it is selecting for, or whether it simply accumulates the choices of the people who built it and call the accumulation – a tradition.

The real question is not: Who leads? But how they lead.

And until that changes, we will continue to expect one-sided power to solve problems created by imbalance.

Restoring balance in the world is not a project for governments alone. It is a project for the people who compose them – for the individuals who make the accumulated choices that either perpetuate the pattern or begin to change it.

The world is not going to balance itself. It is going to be balanced, or not, by the people inside it – by whether enough of them become willing to ask, in enough rooms and at enough levels, the question that the residents in the community hall asked, and that this book has been working toward from its first page:

What are we building? And what are we losing in the building of it?

The remaining chapters of this book return to the most intimate version of that question. To the author's own life – to the specific interior from which this entire argument grew – and to what became possible when one person turned inward and stayed there long enough to understand what had been displaced, and what restoration, at the most personal level, is actually required.

When nations begin to choose balance, they do not just avoid conflict.

They create a world guided not by fear or force, but by awareness, responsibility, and the understanding that what sustains life is at least as powerful as what accelerates it.

Chapter 12

A Living Case of Imbalance: My Story

In a previous chapter we ended with a question: which parts of yourself have you been living without?

I have spent the better part of my past decade finding the answer to that for myself. And in this chapter, I am sharing what I came across.

What follows is my lived experience and understanding, through the lens of Yin and Yang, and not as proof of what caused my illness. The connection I came to see between emotional suppression and my physical health became deeply meaningful to me. My journey unfolded alongside medical care, and I cannot separate the effects of one from the other.

Much of this book has explored the imbalance in the world around us. In truth, that is where I had also begun my journey to finding answers – with a marriage that was producing conflict I could not explain, a career that I loved, but that had taken me away from my feminine self.

It was only later in that room with the practitioner, that I realised I had to turn inward – within the body that was producing symptoms I could not ignore anymore. With the gradually dawning realisation that the imbalance outside me, was the same imbalance I had been living in my own body within.

This chapter is not theory. It is not observation. It is what happened to me – when the ideas in this book stopped being concepts and became a cause-and-effect case that I could not avoid, because I was living it.

I am sharing it as the most honest thing a book can offer – not just the argument but the life behind the argument. And because I believe that somewhere in this particular story, you will find a version of your own.

How it began: The Family

We are not born imbalanced. We are shaped into it – through what we see before we have the language to name it, through what we absorb from the people who love us, the specific instructions of childhood that stay in the subconscious long after the childhood has passed.

I was born into an upper-middle-class business family, in India. Protected, educated, deeply cared for. On the surface, a life of comfort. But beneath that comfort were two very different stories – my parents' – and it is in those stories that my own imbalance was quietly seeded.

My mother grew up in a village, the fourth of eight children in a family that had both power and wealth. But in large families, attention is rarely equal. She was neither the eldest nor the youngest. She existed somewhere in between with her sister (3rd in line) – visible for responsibilities, the silent backbone of the household, the one who helped raise her younger siblings, who showed up where needed and adjusted where necessary for the older siblings. She was resilient before she was ever asked whether she wanted to be one.

Her own aspirations remained unspoken. Unseen. She grew up independent – capable of taking care of everything that mattered – but without ever having been chosen for herself alone. Without ever having heard anyone ask: what do you want?

My father's story was its opposite.

He was born into an affluent metropolitan family, the youngest of seven. By the time he arrived, the wealth and status were already established in his family. There was nothing left to prove in the family, and therefore nothing expected of him to achieve and prove.

He was loved, protected, and indulged. But he was not prepared by anyone to face life. And when adulthood arrived with its demands – marriage, responsibility, the need to build rather than simply inherit – it came as a shock to him. He tried. Different ventures, different directions. But the muscle of discipline had never been exercised, as a foundation in his case. The pressure to create had never been felt from the inside.

My parents came together in an arranged marriage, and despite their contrasts, my parents shared something genuinely beautiful: love, respect, deep care for each other and for us. But what they did not share was growth. Both carried unfulfilled aspirations – my mother's unspoken, my father's unrealised. And without knowing it, they passed those aspirations forward. Into my sisters. And into me.

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The making of my Yang

The mandate my sisters and I grew up with was never stated directly. It did not need to be. We absorbed it through everything we had observed.

Be educated. Be independent. Never depend on anyone. Earn enough so you never have to ask.

We did exactly that. We studied hard. Built careers in strong organisations. Became everything we were taught to become. And there was genuine pride in it – the pride of people who have done what they set out to do, who have stood on their own feet, who do not need to ask.

But somewhere in the becoming, natural traits subtly shifted within me, and I am assuming in my younger sister as well.

My independence became self-sufficiency, and self-sufficiency hardened, over time, into an inability to receive anything from anyone. My strength lost its softness – not suddenly, but gradually, in the way that a river loses its banks when the water has been running in one direction for long enough. Somewhere in the journey, I began to equate financial independence with emotional independence.

I saw diminishing value in the expressions of femininity that I had grown up associating with my mother's uncomplaining endurance – the nurturing, the adjustments, the care, sensitivity with which she tended to both sides of the families, and ours. These felt unnecessary to me. Even frivolous at times, though I deeply cherished the warmth of the relationships, but without the effort and softness of adapting and adjustments behind keeping them. They seemed like traits – certainly not meant for me.

Instead, I became confident. Assertive. Driven. And, unknowingly at that time – increasingly rigid and insensitive to a lot of things.

I had seen my parents' love even without the money my father could earn. Therefore, I strongly felt I did not need a partner for financial support. What I wanted was companionship, love, and genuine empathy. That was what marriage meant to me.

And so, success for me became simple: Build a strong career. Stand on your own feet. Achieve what your parents could not, and marriage equals love, companionship, and always being together.

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When two worlds collide

My husband came from a very different reality than mine.

An upper middle-class service family, from the same metro city in India. In his family stability was not inherited but earned through consistent, disciplined effort. His father worked relentlessly to provide the best for his children. His mother managed the household with the precision of someone who understood that what you have is finite and must be treated accordingly. There was no space for luxurious wants. Respect existed, but love was not expressed in words. The family's shared language was ‘responsibility. And its shared aspiration was: build security, establish your children in good careers, and create wealth for a good living.

And so, his aspiration was equally clear: become financially secure to enjoy wealth, build a comfortable life for the family, fulfill responsibilities that he had been entrusted with. Everything else, he believed, would follow from that. Emotions, relationships, sensitivity did not exist as important words which needed separate attention.

Where I sought emotional fulfilment, he sought financial fulfilment. And this is where our energies began to collide, quietly and without either of us fully understanding it.

We both earned well. We functioned as modern, independent individuals – the arrangement that the culture around us was celebrating as the ideal – double income no kids (DINKs). On paper, everything looked equal. But in practice, something was growing absent.

To name it – Interdependence.

There was no interdependence left between us over time. We were not getting what we needed from each other, and we were not giving what the other wanted because that was not what we had been conditioned for.

We started losing respect for each other – I did not respect him for his money because I was not dependent on him for it, and he did not respect me because there was no support that I showed to him in his journey.

He was Yang with no room for Yin, and I was Yang who yearned for Yin – 2 Yangs – 2 sharks in the relationship.

As a result, instead of complementing each other, we began competing – silently, unconsciously, in the way that two people compete when both have been trained to be self-sufficient and neither has been taught to give and receive.

Arguments became frequent. About money. About respect. About control, about the feeling – on both sides, and with equal sincerity – of not being seen or valued for what we were actually offering.

Looking back, I realise that we were both living by what we had been taught was right. He was striving to provide financial security, while I was striving to remain independent enough never to need it. Both were valuable qualities, both born out of our families' experiences and aspirations. But neither of us had learnt when to step away from that constant need to be strong, capable and in control.

We had carried the energies that helped us navigate the outside world into a relationship that was asking for something more – softness, appreciation, vulnerability, and the willingness to give and receive. We were each fulfilling what we believed was our responsibility, without realising what we were leaving behind in our relationship.

And slowly, without realising it, we did something irreversible:

We killed what we were looking for in each other

He eroded the love within me. I eroded the support within him.

We were not wrong. We were functioning under conditioning.

We were imbalanced.

As a result, both of struggled in the relationship, constantly feeling restless. I became more aggressive, more self-reliant, more independent and more insensitive.

I stopped asking for support. So, I stopped receiving it.

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The search for answers

I had created a great life for myself – money, two beautiful daughters, good health and a career that by every measure was working. And yet I did not feel fulfilled – a big part felt absent from the life I had built, and I had run out of all external explanations for its absence.

After fifteen years of tension, arguments, and the particular emotional distance that settles between two people who have stopped expecting to be understood – I decided to search for ways to resolve the issues, tensions, and see if anything could be worked out – but not outside. For the first time, genuinely inward. Not as self-doubt but as a way of knowing the story board inside me causing the friction.

I did workshops. I read. I reflected with a seriousness I had not previously brought to the interior of my own life. And then, in one workshop session, an instructor spoke about Yin and Yang energies – about how stepping too far into one role creates an imbalance that the relationship around you cannot absorb. About how, when one person occupies a space completely, there is no room for another to enter it.

I felt something uncomfortable as he spoke. The particular discomfort of recognition.

I had unconsciously stepped into the masculine role of the household – the provider, the one who held the structure together. And in doing so, I had not left room for my husband to step into his own. Not because I intended to displace him. Because I was simply doing what I had always done, what my formation had taught me to do: fill the space. Take responsibility. Do not wait to be rescued, make your own decisions, be strong, be independent.

This was not about gender roles. I was operating from an excessive Yang energy of control, independence, and assertion. At the same time there was no Yin left inside me – no sensitivity, no time or need for dressing up, no time for pause, love, care or compassion.

He, feeling displaced, subconsciously, had oscillated between striving to prove his relevance and the particular deflation of a person who cannot find a way to be necessary in the relationship. His Yang was not getting the space to perform to its fullest, while his Yin remained suppressed.

There was no flow of energies between us. Only friction – the main symptom of an imbalance – but neither of us had the language to see.

In that workshop, I found the language to start understanding it.

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The Decision

The decision I made next felt, at the time, radical. But looking back, it was the most considered thing I had done in years.

I decided to step away from my excessive Yang role, to reflect and resume. First, I decided to take a break from my corporate career and start something of my own. Beneath this reason was a deeper intent: to take a pause and restore the sensitivity I had lost as a person.

To step out of the constant forward motion. To create, for the first time, space for my-self. And space for him to regain what was naturally his instinct to assume – to take up responsibility, to grow into the role that my constant presence had been inadvertently preventing him from inhabiting. And space for me to soften – to discover, in the stillness what I had been avoiding, what was actually there, and what was mine to embrace.

I want to be clear about what this was and what it was not. It was not a sacrifice. It was not an admission that corporate ambition was wrong or that the career had been a mistake. I loved my work, but I had taken it so far that I had lost my natural traits.

I did not abandon my Yang when I stepped away from my corporate career. In fact, starting my own business was itself a Yang decision – one that required courage, initiative, ambition and the willingness to build something of my own. But this time, I chose to do things differently, and at my own pace.

I began working but without the constant urgency to achieve more, and faster, and with constant fire of meeting a deadline. I allowed myself to pause, to reflect, and to let things unfold rather than rushing to control every outcome. I introduced yoga and meditation into my life. I began giving time to myself, to my health, and to my family – to the relationships and the quieter parts of life that I had neglected for years.

I was consciously nurturing my Yin, allowing softness, patience, care and stillness to find their place alongside my ambition and independence. I was still driven. I was still capable. I was still me. But I was no longer allowing those strengths to occupy every part of my life.

And that was when I began to understand something fundamental:

Balance is not about letting go of our strengths or diminishing the energy that has helped us succeed.

It is about consciously making space for the energy we have suppressed, allowing it to grow until both can coexist and complement each other.

I started taking small steps – nothing drastic or fast. But rather slow. It took months of patience. What followed surprised me.

Space gave my husband's till-now suffocated Yang space to grow. His career strengthened. Opportunities opened. His sense of his own capability expanded in ways that had not been possible when I was occupying the space that those capabilities needed in order to develop.

When I stopped occupying his space, he strengthened, he stepped forward. We were expanding the breadth of our relationship.

With that shift – not immediately, not without difficulty, but slowly things changed in our home. Arguments became less frequent, less egoistic, and different. Less about competing, more about navigating. We were no longer two strong, dominant energies fighting for the same space. We were now, slowly, tentatively and imperfectly, beginning to move together.

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The Impact | What changed, and what didn't

Did everything become perfect immediately? No.

We still argue. The many years of patterns between us did not dissolve suddenly or magically. But what changed was most importantly the way I looked at situations, my reactions and my response.

My response changed from reacting and responding in a split second to all arguments, to one of pause. I now take time to respond, sometimes more calmly, and sometimes even after a day of sleeping over it. I realized, with that, my body was taking less stress in the stomach – the pain I used to feel in every argument of ours, was now subsiding and slowly disappearing.

This is a lived experience – an energetic one. And it is the most honest account I can give of what actually happened.

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What the body always knew, but I didn't

The prologue of this book opened with the moment I sat in a practitioner's room and heard her say: when Yang overwhelms Yin, the system begins to strain. The body is not separate from what the mind refuses to feel. It simply finds another way to speak.

By the time that sentence had reached me, my body had already been speaking for years. But I had just not been listening in the right language.

The diagnosis – adenomyosis, endometriosis, excessive inflammation of organs inside, and the uterine wall significantly thickened, surgery strongly recommended – had arrived as clinical certainty a couple of years back.

I sat in the car outside the doctor's clinic, that day, for a long time afterwards. I took note of my thoughts, of my body and my feeling. I was confused, not just about the diagnosis, but about how something could have been happening inside me for so long without my knowing.

I spoke with more doctors, friends and their friends, I read online, and I researched. I learned that endometriosis affected an estimated one in ten women of reproductive age worldwide, but the exact cause of it remains unknown. Researchers believe it develops due to a combination of genetic, hormonal, and immune system factors. What struck me more than the statistic was a dinner party, weeks later my diagnosis. At the party every other woman I spoke with, that night, had already had a hysterectomy (uterus surgery) – different diagnoses, different doctors, different years of their lives, but the same conclusion. It should have unsettled me. Instead, I felt reassured. If this many women had arrived at the same door, surely it was not a drastic step. It was simply the step.

And yet, somewhere quieter than logic, I felt something which was not resistance to the surgery itself, but a refusal to rush toward it immediately. I wanted to give my body time to heal internally – mentally, and emotionally, before healing myself physically. I moved through the process of consultations and second opinions, but this time with no hasty decision, no urgency and no aggression. I must admit here that by the grace of God, I had the time to do so – there was no urgency medically, therefore, instead of getting into another motion – of surgery – I decided to take a pause again – and reflect again, before my next step.

I took my time. I decided to explore treatments to help me heal, more importantly emotionally. And it was then that I decided to go to see the practitioner (from my prologue) for emotional therapy and healing along-side my medication. It was there that the clinical picture met the energetic one.

This practitioner spoke about prolonged emotional pressure, constant drive, the suppression of softer emotional qualities – about how, when these continue over years, disruptions within the body follow – hormonal, and structural.

The quieter forces of rest, receptivity, and emotional softness, when they remain unexpressed for long enough, do not simply disappear. They find other ways to make themselves known. In the language of ancient philosophy, she said, this happens when Yang overwhelms Yin. And that is how my body was now showing signs – of an internal system overwhelmed by the Yang overdrive.

These words stung me like a bee that day.

It had been eight years since the time I had started my business and tried to restore balance in my world. I felt I had taken all the right and necessary steps to be balanced.

Little did I know that I had spent years exploring only my external landscape – the marriage, the career, the relationships, but never acknowledged its presence within me. My internal landscape had been absorbing, without a medium for release, everything I had been refusing to feel. According to the practitioner, there was emotional trauma stuck in my gut, my intestines, my uterus and stomach. That had led to excessive inflammation over many years, and hence the medical state I was in now.

I agree, this was not a scientific conclusion. I want to be honest about that. But it reinforced what I had heard eight years back in the workshop I had attended on Yin and Yang energies, when I had stopped recognizing myself, and before I had decided to take a pause from my corporate work life – about how these energies impact us.

Questions started popping in my head. They strengthened my views on energetic imbalance and its impact even more. It was a mirror, and the reflection in it was one I could no longer look away from.

Prolonged emotional suppression… had shown physical consequences.

The return to Balance

After my visit to the practitioner, I began the practice of listening to the body, to the suppressed emotions I had been managing rather than feeling, to the unresolved experiences that had been sitting underneath my relentless forward motion.

I began to walk. Not to a destination, not to a target; but simply to move and to be present in the moving. I began to practice Yin yoga – the kind of movement that asks you to slow down, to hold a position, to let the body release what it has been holding rather than performing what it can achieve. I built stillness into my days – what people call a waste of time: with resistance at first, and then gradually with approaching relief.

Breathwork. Meditation. Healing. Not as alternatives to medical treatment which I continued with the medical consultations and followed the professional guidance, but as an expansion of the conversation I was having with my own body. A way of asking different questions of it, and of staying with the answers rather than moving immediately to fix what they revealed.

The changes were not dramatic and they did not happen overnight. But they were real.

In a few months the inflammation in my body reduced. The weight that had accumulated due to excessive inflammation in my body began to reduce. The pain that had been a constant background presence in my body began to ease.

I am not making medical claims about the mechanism of this – I am a person, not a clinical study. What I can say is that the body responded, measurably to a change in how it was being held – to the pauses, to the stillness, to the awareness and consciousness. Whether the connection was direct or indirect or entirely coincidental, something shifted when I shifted.

What this story is, and is Not

I want to be direct about what I am and am not saying.

I am not prescribing a path for women to follow. I am not arguing that women should leave their careers or that stepping back is universally wise or that financial independence is a mistake. I am still a financially independent person who earns and spends the way I want. My decision to step away from corporate life was made in specific circumstances, at a specific moment, for reasons that were personal and driven by a conscious effort of mine to restore my balance – and it worked, for me, in my situation. It is not a template.

I am neither propagating dependency, nor interdependence, nor suggesting that traditional societal role divisions are the reason for the imbalance that this book has described.

I am also not making a medical claim. The connection I experienced between my emotional patterns and my physical symptoms was real to me, was confirmed by a perspective that I found credible, and was accompanied by physical changes that I cannot fully explain. But I followed medical advice alongside my inner work, and I still am taking my medical course, therefore I would not suggest that anyone forgo proper medical care in favour of energetic exploration. Both are important. They are not in competition. They should go hand in hand, because energetic work will bring about peace and awareness that will be very helpful along with the medical treatment.

But, what I am surely saying is this: when energies fall out of balance, life begins to lose its natural rhythm – regardless of how modern, equal, or progressive the structure appears from the outside. The evidence of this is visible in the world, as the preceding chapters have argued.

Balance is not about choosing one side over the other.

It is about the awareness to recognise when to hold and when to release, when to lead and when to allow, when to stand firm and when to soften.

Not as a fixed prescription, but as a living practice – adjusted, consciously, to whatever the moment actually requires.

The answer to Yang overdrive is not Yin overdrive. The answer to one extreme is not the other extreme. It is integration – the conscious development and expression of both energies, in both people, in whatever configuration the relationship and the lives allow.

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What I learned

The insight that settled most deeply, after years of searching and experimenting and paying attention, was simpler than I expected.

I had been looking, for most of my adult life, for something outside myself; and what I found, when I finally turned inward with genuine seriousness, was that the thing I was looking for outside was waiting to be restored within.

Not because the inner work replaces the outer – it does not. The marriage still requires two people. The career still requires decisions. The body still requires attention. But the quality of everything outside changed when the quality of what I was bringing to it from within changed. When I stopped running entirely on Yang and allowed Yin back in with the stillness, the receptivity, the willingness to slow down and feel what was actually there, it was then the world I was navigating became, not easier exactly, but more available. More responsive. More alive.

If balance can change the atmosphere of two people under one roof, and shift the pattern of years, then can it have a similar impact at larger scales as well – in organisations, in societies, in the way that nations understand and exercise their power?

This book has argued that it can. The pattern is the same at every level, and what is restored within one person does not stay contained within that person. It moves outward into the relationships they inhabit, the teams they build, the cultures they compose, and the world they collectively shape.

The final chapter turns toward how suppressed energies find their way into your bodies, what traditional medicine taught centuries ago, and how that connects with modern medicine, and philosophy of today. That is where this book ends – not with a diagnosis, but with a reality check, and then the way forward.

Chapter 13

Relation between Suppressed Energies and Chronic illnesses

A note before this chapter begins: what follows draws on the author's understanding of traditional healing systems, modern medicine, and her observations of practitioners working at the intersection of emotional and physical health. It is offered as one lens of understanding and not as medical advice. Anyone experiencing chronic illness should continue working with qualified medical professionals. This chapter does not argue against conventional medicine. It argues for a wider conversation alongside it.

The previous chapter traced the story of one life - mine. This chapter widens the frame.

The connection between emotional suppression and physical illness is not a new idea. It is, in fact, one of the oldest ideas in the history of medicine, present in Chinese medical theory for more than two thousand years, in Indian Ayurvedic medicine for longer still, and more recently explored by a growing body of Western research that is beginning, carefully and with considerable scientific rigour, to map what traditional practitioners have long described: that what the mind refuses to process, the body is left to carry.

This is not a fringe position. The relationship between chronic stress and chronic illness is among the most consistently supported findings in modern medicine. The language of 'lifestyle diseases' which is now accounting for the majority of non-communicable illness in the developed world, is, in many respects, a way of understanding that how a person inhabits their life, and in particular how they manage the

emotional dimensions of it, is inseparable from what happens to their body over time. Stress related illnesses are topping the charts of medical problems worldwide. What we eat, our physical activities, and everything we feed our body, reacts to the emotions, and the thoughts that we carry, and therefore the results of any diet or exercises depend on our emotional well-being.

The framework of Yin and Yang adds to this conversation not as a replacement for the clinical understanding. It is a different way of naming the same dynamic – one that makes the pattern visible in a way different from that of numbers and diagnoses.

What happens when Yin energy stagnates

In the language of Yin and Yang, Yin is the energy of receptivity, stillness, inward flow, nourishment, and emotional expression. Yin energy impacts the parasympathetic nervous system – the rest-and-digest state – and is deeply connected to the cyclical, hormonally regulated intelligence of the female body. It is the energy that allows a person to feel, to release, to restore.

What traditional medicine describes as Yin stagnation bears a striking resemblance to what modern research describes under the heading of chronic stress and emotional repression. When emotions are consistently swallowed rather than expressed, when grief is buried rather than moved through, when anger is silenced, and need is postponed indefinitely, the result is not peace. The result is accumulation. The energy does not disappear. It congests – in some part of the body.

Traditional Chinese medicine and Ayurveda, have long associated specific emotional patterns with specific physiological systems. Ayurvedic medicine explains this through the concept of *ama* – a Sanskrit term for toxic accumulation that builds when the eliminative processes are compromised.

In Ayurveda, digestion applies not only to food but to experience: the inability to process emotional events is understood to produce the same kind of accumulation in the body as the inability to process food. Both traditions converge on the same insight: stagnation, whether physical or emotional, is a precursor to disease.

Suppressed anger and resentment are understood to create what ancient practitioners call liver stagnation, and what modern medicine describes as the effects of chronic cortisol elevation on hepatic function and inflammatory regulation. Unmet needs and suppressed creative energy are associated with reproductive system congestion. Grief that has not been processed is linked to respiratory conditions. Inability to process life's experiences is linked to digestive issues. Over-nurturing others while neglecting one self, are patterns linked with breast issues. The body is not a machine that operates independently of the interior life running inside it. It is a record of that interior life, accumulated over time.

Chronic inflammation (like in my case), for instance, is often linked to prolonged stress, which arises from prolonged emotional suppression. Similar is the case with other chronic patterns of migraines, fibromyalgia, pelvic pain, autoimmune disorders, and depression – the body becomes the battlefield where unspoken emotions accumulate.

Yin energy is designed to flow.

When it flows, it nourishes, cleanses, and restores. When it is blocked, when the emotional currents it governs are repeatedly redirected inward rather than allowed expression, then what was meant to move begins to accumulate.

And accumulation, in any living system, eventually impacts the body.

Modern neuroscience is arriving at this understanding through a different route, describing the nervous system's layered response to perceived safety and threat.

When a person is chronically unable to access a genuine state of safety and social connection, the system remains caught in a state of activation or shutdown. Neither state is conducive to healing. The immune system is compromised. Hormonal regulation is disrupted. Inflammatory processes remain elevated. And the body cannot fully repair itself in this state of chronic threat activation.

Yin stagnation in a Female body

The female body is particularly sensitive to this dynamic, not because women are inherently more fragile, but because the female hormonal and reproductive system is designed for rhythmic regulation, for cycles of expansion and contraction, activity and rest, output and restoration. When that cyclical intelligence is chronically overridden and when the body is kept in sustained activation with no access to the restoration it is designed to require, then the disruption accumulates in precisely the systems that are most dependent on that rhythm.

It is widely recognized in modern medicine, that chronic pain conditions, particularly in the reproductive system, are heavily influenced by stress, anxiety, and emotional trauma. When a woman repeatedly, consistently and constantly: avoids expressing anger, suppresses tears, endures rather than confronts, and adjusts rather than asserts; then her body often remains in a prolonged stress response. Yang (fight-or-flight) remains activated. Yin (rest-and-repair) becomes compromised. Instead of releasing any grief, the body internalizes every emotion and absorbs it, and stores it. This creates what can be described as stagnant Yin which is heavy, unexpressed emotional residue that has no outlet, making the internal body, and whatever enters it – toxic.

Practitioners working at the intersection of emotional health and women's physical wellbeing have observed consistent patterns across conditions including hormonal dysregulation, menstrual irregularities, polycystic ovary syndrome, endometriosis, adenomyosis, fibroids, autoimmune conditions, thyroid dysfunction, and perimenopausal intensity.

The conditions are physiologically distinct. But what they share, in many of the cases, is a history of chronic emotional suppression – of a woman who has been managing rather than feeling, enduring rather than expressing, adjusting rather than asserting – for long enough that the body's regulatory systems remain under sustained pressure.

This is not a claim that emotional suppression is the only cause of these conditions, or that addressing the emotional dimension will resolve the physiological one in every case. It is a claim that the two dimensions are not separate like the conventional medical framework historically assumes, and that the practitioners who treat only the physiological issues without attending to the emotional pattern may be addressing the symptom while leaving its conditions intact.

The body is not separate from what the mind refuses to feel.

It is, in many cases, the place where that refusal eventually arrives.

What happens when Yang gets no rest

Yang energy – action, assertion, drive, the forward-moving force that builds and protects – is not, in its natural form, a state of permanent activation. It is designed for dynamic engagement followed by genuine recovery. The sympathetic nervous system, which governs the fight-or-flight response that is Yang's physiological expression, is designed to activate in response to genuine threat, and then return to a resting state when the threat has passed.

The problem is that in modern masculine culture, the threat never quite passes.

The expectation of constant readiness – financially, professionally, physically, emotionally –keeps the sympathetic system, of both men and women, running continuously, often for decades, without the genuine restoration that would allow it to recalibrate.

The traditional masculine archetype of grounded strength, protection with calm authority, and stable leadership is no longer visible. In its place, modern masculinity is defined by constant round-the-clock activity, visible aggression, relentless ambition and competition. Without permission to rest, or express vulnerability, or share emotional load, the Yang energies are in an overdrive, in both men and women, with no cooling mechanism. They are active throughout the day and round the clock. This dysregulates the very drive that allows men to build, protect, and provide, and women to restore and reproduce.

Traditional Chinese medicine offers a lens on this too. Excess Yang – fire without its counterpart water, action without its counterpart rest – is understood to produce what practitioners call empty fire: a state of hyperactivation that depletes the resources it draws on, producing heat, inflammation, and eventually exhaustion at a systemic level.

Yang overdrive reflects in the body through symptoms like elevated cortisol, chronically elevated adrenaline, disrupted sleep architecture, increased systemic inflammation, and progressive immune dysregulation, which maps with precision onto this traditional description.

What makes this particularly significant is the degree to which the culture of masculinity actively discourages the interventions that would address it. Rest is read as laziness. Emotional expression and sensitivity are read as weakness. Seeking support is read as inadequacy. The very qualities that would allow the male system to recalibrate – the Yin qualities of receptivity, vulnerability, the willingness to be held rather than always to hold – are precisely the qualities that most expressions of masculinity treat as inadmissible.

The body does not distinguish between brave endurance and helplessness under attack. Both keep the sympathetic system running. Both defer the repair.

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Yang overdrive in a Male body

The conversation about emotional suppression and physical illness has historically been applied more readily to women. But the male body is not immune to the cost of suppression either, and the rise in cases of stress-related illnesses among men tells this story.

Modern science studying men's health points to a cluster of conditions associated with chronic stress load and emotional suppression: hypertension, cardiovascular disease, heart attack, stroke, chronic inflammation, insomnia, digestive disorders, and the burnout syndrome – a collapse of the very drive that sustained the activation. Cardiovascular disease remains one of the leading causes of premature death in men globally, and while biological factors contribute, epidemiological research consistently associates the risk with chronic stress exposure, emotional isolation, and the inability or unwillingness to seek support are widely understood to play a significant role.

The male emotional landscape under chronic Yang activation has been described, by researchers in men's health and psychotherapy, as a landscape of conversion: the emotions that the culture does not permit men to express directly do not disappear. They convert. Anger that cannot be expressed outward becomes chronic tension – in the shoulders, the jaw, the lower back, the gut, digestion issues. Fear that cannot be acknowledged becomes hyper-control. Grief that has no form of expression becomes irritability and numbness, and eventually the advent of depression that men are disproportionately unlikely to identify or seek help for.

Clinicians working with men who developed serious illness have often observed a decades-long pattern of suppression of their own needs in the service of providing for others – a pattern that looked, from the outside, like exemplary strength and responsibility.

The internalized isolation that results from this pattern is widely linked to depression among men, and to a broader crisis of male despair that goes largely unspoken. These are not simply clinical footnotes.

They are the downstream consequences of a cultural pattern that has been telling men, for generations, that the way to survive is to feel less. And the body, over time, will always find a way to contradict this pattern.

The male body is biologically less hormonally cyclical than the female body, but it is not immune to stress overload.

Where Research and Tradition converge

The convergence between traditional healing systems and emerging Western medical research on this topic is one of the more striking intellectual developments of the last three decades.

An emerging field of modern science – one concerned with the interactions between psychological processes, the nervous system, and the immune system – has provided a way of understanding, in physiological terms, what traditional practitioners have long described in energetic terms. This growing body of research points toward chronic psychological stress producing changes across immune function, inflammatory markers, hormonal regulation, and cellular repair.

It suggests that the quality of a person's emotional relationships, and their capacity for emotional expression, matters for health outcomes across a wide range of conditions. And it suggests that attending to the psychological and emotional dimensions of chronic illness can greatly support the body's physiological healing.

What practitioners in integrative medicine, somatic therapy, mind-body approaches to chronic illness, and lifestyle medicine have consistently observed is that the most effective treatment of many chronic conditions requires a holistic integrated treatment – attending to both the physiological and the emotional – because they influence each other in a continuous, bidirectional loop. Treating the inflammation while leaving the conditions that produce it intact, is an incomplete intervention. It may reduce the immediate symptom, but it is unlikely to resolve the underlying pattern that is causing it continuously.

Traditional systems have long developed practices that activate the parasympathetic nervous system – what traditional Chinese medicine describes as nourishing Yin and what Ayurveda describes as restoring the flow of *prana* – and modern science has begun to examine these practices with rigour. Meditation and breathwork have measurable effects on inflammatory markers, hormonal regulation, and the physiological indicators of chronic stress.

Slow, breath-oriented movement practices like yoga, tai chi, qigong – have demonstrated clinical effects on conditions ranging from inflammatory disorders to cardiovascular risk factors (this is what I personally experienced which reduced the inflammation in my body to a large extent). None of this replaces conventional medical treatment. These are complementary approaches, most effective when integrated with the best available medical care, not substituted for it.

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What this means for the Argument this Book has been making

This chapter sits here, in the book's final chapters, because the body is where the argument becomes most personal and most undeniable.

The patterns traced through nations, workplaces, and relationships are not abstract. They are lived in bodies. The woman who has spent twenty years suppressing her needs in order to hold her marriage together or meet her career needs, the man who has spent thirty years running on cortisol and pride in order to provide for his family or meet his ambitions, is also the same female/male leader who is carrying, in their bodies, the accumulated cost of an imbalance the world around them has been calling success.

The chronic illness that results around these patterns is not a character flaw or a failure of willpower. It is the body's honest response to conditions that are not sustainable. Yang without Yin, is a system running continuously in one mode, without the restoration that mode depends on, until the restoration is forced.

The body forces it, eventually. Through illness, through breakdown, through the particular exhaustion that no amount of rest seems to touch.

That is not a pleasant invitation. But it is, for many people, the way the invitation finally arrives. And it is worth understanding, when it does, that the body is not failing. It is communicating – in the only language available to it after the other languages have been ignored for long enough by us.

The directionality of healing comes when the emotional dimension is attended to, alongside the physiological, when suppressed energies find appropriate expression, when the nervous system is given genuine conditions for restoration – only then the body responds.

The body holds what the mouth does not release.

And what is held long enough becomes the conversation the body insists on having – until someone is finally willing to listen – and that is the start of awareness and conscious living.

The conclusion that follows next is the book's last, summarising the journey we took in this book, with the hope that it still touches your heart somewhere.

Conclusion: Beyond Gender Equality; Toward Energetic Balance

There comes a moment in every journey when the road appears to circle back to where it began.

The landscape looks familiar. The questions sound familiar. You may even find yourself standing before the same door. But you are no longer the same person who first arrived there.

This book's journey began in a practitioner's room.

A woman sat with a medical diagnosis she had not expected and a life she had never fully questioned. For years, she had done what the world had taught her to do. She had moved forward, solved problems, carried responsibility, managed relationships, raised a family, built a career and stayed strong through circumstances that rarely allowed her to be anything else.

From the outside, she appeared capable, but from the inside, parts of her had begun to fracture without her knowing. Her body forced a pause where her life had permitted none. And in that pause, she was offered an unfamiliar question.

Not: What is happening to your body?

But: What has your life required you to become?

That question travelled far beyond the walls of that room.

It crossed oceans and entered presidential chambers. It sat across from the United States, a nation exhausted by the performance of invincibility, and asked whether power had become so central to its identity that it no longer knew what power was for.

It sat across from India, ancient and ambitious, rising and choking, building and breaking, and asked whether development still deserved that name when the people pursuing it could no longer breathe.

It walked into marriages in which no one had betrayed anyone, yet two people had quietly disappeared from one another.

It entered organisations filled with talented people producing exceptional results at an unsustainable human cost.

It stood beside men who had been taught that vulnerability was failure.

It stood beside women who had been told they could enter the rooms of power only if they left their softness outside.

It met leaders who knew how to command but not how to listen. And it met quieter leaders whose contributions remained invisible because they did not resemble the world's preferred image of authority.

It passed through cities, hospitals, homes, boardrooms, elections, dinner tables and bodies.

And now, after travelling through the world outside us, it returns to where it began.

To a single human life.

To yours.

Not to ask what is wrong with you. But to ask something far more unsettling – and far more hopeful:

What have you been required to suppress in order to become who the world rewarded you for being?

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The Door we keep walking past

You know the door.

You've stood in front of it before. Maybe this morning, when you said yes to something your body was screaming no to. Maybe last night, when you went quiet in a conversation that needed your voice. Maybe years ago, in a moment so small that you almost didn't notice it – and yet you've been thinking about it ever since.

Here's the uncomfortable truth: You see the door, but dismiss it. Probably you see it but not notice it. Or you simply shut it for yourself, and stand behind it. And unless you consciously take note of this door, your awareness doesn't open that door for you. And then is the next most important step – the willingness to walk through that door.

That's the real subject of this book. Not gender. Not equality. It's the gap between seeing, knowing and doing – the exact space where most of us live our entire lives.

There is a reason why we tend to or choose to ignore the door – why imbalance survives even after we become aware of it. It is because it is familiar – and familiarity often feels safer than freedom.

How many times have you thought – I know I should change this… and then continued exactly as before? Why? What does the old pattern provide to you – Control? Belonging? Approval? Protection from disappointment? Protection from uncertainty? Protection from discovering what you actually want? It provides you safety, comfort, security, because that's what you think is normal and risk-free life.

The executive who has built an identity around being indispensable may understand the need to delegate, yet still feel insecure when someone else does the task without his/her intervention.

The father who wants a closer relationship with his son may know he needs to speak more openly, yet find that the words disappear the moment vulnerability approaches.

The nation that understands the cost of aggression may continue to escalate because restraint could be interpreted as weakness.

The woman who has spent decades caring for everyone may feel selfish the first time she asks what she wants.

Noticing the door is unsettling – because once we recognise a pattern, we can no longer fully believe whether it is simply our nature or a pattern to disrupt. Awareness opens the door. But it does not automatically take us through it. Crossing the door requires courage, practice, sometimes it requires therapy, sometimes a spiritual practice, sometimes a medical pause, sometimes a conversation that has been avoided for years, and sometimes it begins with a choice so small that no one else notices it.

Many times, in our journey of changing our pattern, we will also feel compelled or tempted to go back to our old pattern – sometimes to protect ourselves from rejection. Sometimes from helplessness. Sometimes from conflict. Sometimes from the possibility that another person may not choose us unless we remain useful, accommodating, successful or strong.

Every change in the existing pattern will be very unsettling in the beginning, and it will require our willingness, and continuous focus and effort to proceed to the transformation.

In our cases – Noor began learning the names of the people two levels below her. Siddharth asked a question in a meeting that he had never thought to ask before. Roy continued leading in a way the system did not yet know how to recognise. The community hall stood up and asked what, amid all the development, was being preserved. Nancy let her husband choose the restaurant.

These small changes cause a ripple effect which lead to changes in the bigger things because a person interrupted an old pattern. And ultimately the system will change because every system, no matter how large it is, is ultimately a pattern repeated by the same people.

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The Question Is Closer Now

At the beginning of this book, Yin and Yang may have appeared to you as an idea, a philosophy, a framework or a new vocabulary for patterns you had observed but could not name.

But now the question is closer.

It may be sitting beside you in your marriage, or waiting in the meeting you are about to attend. It may be present in the way you speak to your child, or in the way you respond to criticism. In the way you lead, or in the way you apologise. In the way you treat your body, or in the way you react when you are afraid.

It may be hidden inside the goal you are pursuing, or inside the goal you are too frightened to pursue. It may appear in the speed at which you make decisions, or in the number of decisions you continue postponing. It may appear in your inability to say no, or in the ease with which you say no before anyone can come close.

It may be present in the way you enter a room – prepared to contribute or prepared to prove. Or in the way you listen to understand, or for the moment you can respond. Or in the way you speak – because something needs to be said, or because silence makes you feel insignificant? Or in the way you stay silent – because you are reflective, or because you have learnt that visibility is dangerous?

Awareness about all these questions and many more such questions, does not require you to redesign your entire life tonight, or announce a transformation.

And you do not need to become perfectly balanced before tomorrow morning. A *tilted* scale does not return to balance through urgency and rush.

What you first need to do is to begin noticing – notice the moments when urgency enters before necessity, when anger arrives to protect an emotion, you are reluctant to feel, when you say yes while your body is saying no, when you take control not because leadership is needed, but because uncertainty is unbearable, when you remain silent not because peace matters, but because your voice once carried a cost.

Notice which part of you is praised most often, then look for the part that receives no applause. That may be where the rest of your life is waiting.

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The Journey after the Final Page

Books usually end by closing an argument. But this one cannot. Because balance is not a conclusion. It is the beginning of a different way of moving through the world.

The woman in the practitioner's room did not receive a final answer that day. She received a doorway. Beyond it was not a life without ambition, conflict, grief or uncertainty. It was a life in which she could begin asking why success had required so much aggression. Why achievement had required so much absence. Why care had so often been offered to others but withheld from herself.

She did not wake the next morning transformed.

The nations did not lay down their weapons in a single decision.

The corporations did not rewrite their measures of success in a single day.

The marriages did not heal in a single conversation.

The scales did not tilt to balance suddenly.

But with something small and slow – a conscious noticing. That is where every transformation begins – not with certainty. But with recognition.

The instant when an old pattern reveals itself as a pattern, you may either return to control, overwork, defence, silence, impatience, or fear; or you can grow the ability to recognise your pattern, disrupt it, and know the way to reflection before reaction, feeling before force, rest before collapse – the choice would be yours.

The world is not waiting for a new gender to overpower the old one. It is not waiting for women to become stronger than men, or men to become more like women. It is waiting for strength to recover its wisdom. For ambition to recover its soul. For leadership to recover its humanity. And for each of us to recover the half of ourselves we left behind while becoming who we thought we had to be.

The road from here will not look the same for everyone reading this book. For one person, it may begin with a boundary. For another, with an apology. For another, with a decision delayed long enough to hear intuition speak. And for another, with the courage to enter the arena after years of hiding.

But somewhere, perhaps today, a person will pause after today, before repeating an old reaction. A leader will listen. A father will soften. A woman will stop apologising for needing rest. A team will choose sustainability over spectacle. A city will ask what its progress is destroying. Or a nation will discover that restraint can also be power.

The movement may be almost invisible at first, but it will begin here.

In the energy you bring to the next moment. In the part of yourself you choose to recover. In the question that remains after this book closes:

What becomes possible when you no longer have to live as only half of who you are?

The imbalance in the world is not accidental. It is a reflection of how we live, how we lead, how we relate, and how we exist within ourselves.

And what is reflected can be changed by changing what it reflects. Through awareness and willingness.

The imbalance is real, it is visible and it is heavy. But it is not written permanently into human nature.

It is reversible.

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The Tilted Scales is not just a book about an imbalanced world.

It is a mirror – to help you see the patterns shaping your life, without you realising.

And a map – to help you restore what has always been within you, but lost.

As I Close This Book

Perhaps every book begins as something an author asks the world. But this one spoke back to me. It has changed me even more than when I started writing it. It challenged me to keep going on when I felt scared of putting my thoughts on paper, and it pushed me to ask the difficult questions that I asked in this book.

As I write the final words here, I want to express my gratitude once again to God, for being with me through every step of this journey. For placing the questions within me, guiding me towards the answers, and giving me the courage to write what often felt deeply personal, difficult, and vulnerable. Thank You for holding me, guiding me when the path was unclear, and reminding me, again and again, to trust the journey, and more importantly to trust The Path you have chosen for me.

This book may carry my name, but I know I did not write it alone.

Much gratitude to my mother, for believing in this book before it was a book.

For believing in my difficult journey – in what I was trying to understand, what I wanted to express, and in the voice that I was still learning to trust. You encouraged me to write when the thoughts existed only as fragments, questions, observations, and emotions within me. You reminded me that what I had experienced and understood was worth expressing. You gave me the confidence to put my inner world into words, and the courage to take the leap of faith required to share it with others.

Whenever my belief in myself became uncertain, your belief remained steady. Your encouragement was not simply support from the outside. It became part of the strength with which I continued.

And to you, my dear readers, for staying with me all the way to these final words. A book asks for something not everyone is willing to give – your time, your attention, and, in places, a part of yourself. You gave this one all three. You sat with the countries, the cases, the questions, and, perhaps, with a few uncomfortable truths of your own along the way. That is not a small thing, and I do not take it lightly.

Wherever this book found you, and wherever it leaves you now, I am grateful you let it in.

And so, I close these pages with humility, faith, and immense gratitude.

And with the hope that the journey of awareness and willingness that began within me will now begin, in its own way, within you.

Thank you.

Your author,

Pooja Bansal