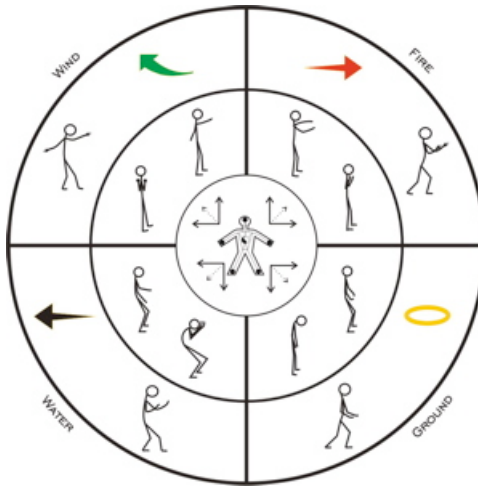




The Five Rings Matrix



BASIC THEORY

The Five Rings Matrix is the fruit of a thirty-year East/West multidisciplinary project to develop a non-verbal language that was both visual and kinesthetic. It was designed to supplement our current verbal models and methods by offering a missing piece to the puzzle of change.

This way of movement thinking forms the foundation for all the exercises and ideas in this Encyclopedia of Becoming. It constantly reminds us of intricate yet ultimately simple inner dance that sustains our perceptions, interpretations, actions, and choices.

Taking its inspiration from the classical traditions of Asia, the language of the Five Rings emphasizes the aesthetic dimension of life. From this point of view, we are sensitive to and appreciative of the beauty component of things. In Greek philosophy, they spoke of the triad of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful. The term itself originally referred to “sense perception.” As a noun, an aesthetic can refer to a set of principles.

Beauty cannot be boxed in and limited to just one thing. It touches all of you. Engaging life through its eyes, everything has multiple dimensions. In this spirit, we use the terms *Fire*, *Water*, *Wind*, *Ground*, and *Space* to refer to a wide range of different issues, dimensions, qualities, behaviors, etc. that are all somehow linked by being members of a family.

Our research paid particular attention to the inter-relationships between: attitude and action, habit and intention, thought and feeling, and insight and embodiment.

The Five Rings Matrix is especially valuable as a tool kit for leveraging the non-verbal components of attitude:

- **State-of-Mind** (non-verbally) *center of gravity*
- **Feeling** (non-verbally) *muscular shape*
- **Disposition** (non-verbally) *readiness to move in a particular way*
- **Carriage** (non-verbally) *posture x stance*

In this way, we can more effectively engage with the bureaucracy of habits and smooth the way to the accomplishment of our goals.

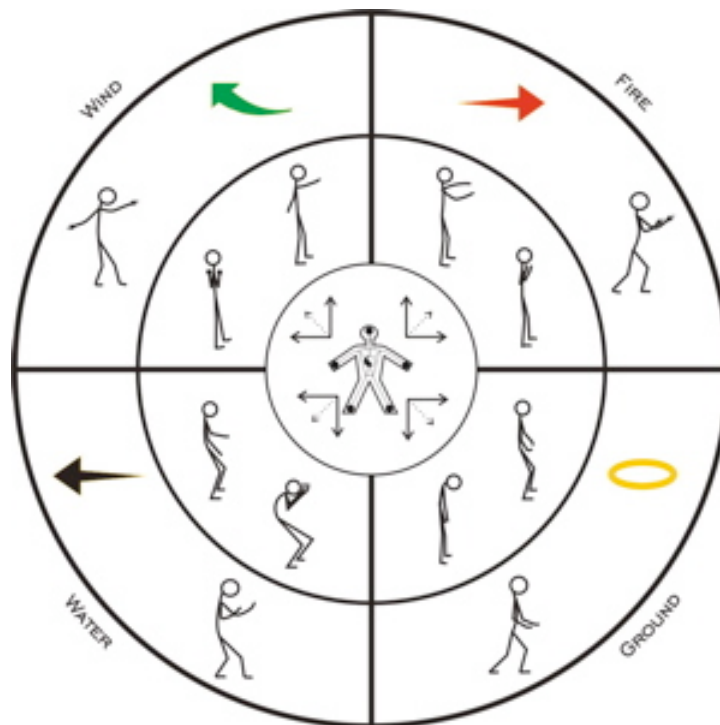
The practices we developed using The Five Rings Matrix are more than simple exercises. Because the model itself does not divide us into mind and body, it offers the possibility of creating powerfully simple Internal Exercises and Movement Simulations.

UNFOLDING THE FIVE RINGS NON-VERBAL MATRIX

*Symbols serve to express ideas.
Words serve to explain symbols.*

*One who clings to words does not get the symbols.
One who clings to symbols does not get the ideas.*

Wang Pi, 3rd Century A.D.



THE OUTER CIRCLE

The outer circle is analogous to the boundary of a cell, the utterly primal organ that both marks you as an individual being and serves as the interface or organ of relationship. This is like the ectoderm or outer layer of the embryo that later becomes both the outer layer of the skin and the nervous system.

Of the activities centered here, our focus is how the boundary/body/being responds to encounters.

Our movement building blocks are the four fundamental ways of responding to encounters. Looked at this way, we see a strong resonance with Chinese medicine's view of the immune system, which they call, Wei Qi or Defending Spirits of the Boundary.

The martial artist meditates on these responses and states of mind. The icons in this circle reference the four movements of our *Defending Spirits* internal exercise. Working with your boundary responses, you can much more rapidly and authentically shape your attitude and presence to fit the situation and your goals.

We have found a high degree of correlation between non-verbal encounter responses and many four-quadrant assessment instruments.

THE MIDDLE CIRCLE

The middle circle is analogous to the mesoderm or middle layer of the embryo, the source of the muscles, bones, connective tissue, and dermis or middle layer of the skin.

Of all the activities centered here, our focus is on our responses to our responses and how we hold them.

Our movement building blocks are the four fundamental families or spectrums of feelings. Of special interest is the relationship between muscular shapes and emotional states.

The internal martial artist, qi gong, or yoga practitioner will use their whole body to hold a particular stance with the desire of activating its particular energy and feeling.

Peter Drucker, the modern management guru, recommended that you “master your own energies” in order to optimize your leadership ability.

The icons in the middle circle reference the eight stances of our internal exercise, Shapes of Feeling. Developing greater emotional muscle control is an invaluable personal resource.

THE INNER CIRCLE

The inner circle is home to very primal movements and structures. It is analogous to the endoderm or inner layer of the embryo, the source of the epithelium, the cells that line internal cavities and organs, including the digestive tract.

Of all the activities centered here, our focus is on two complimentary systems functions:

- 1) Maintaining one's fundamental integrity. The practice of Centered Presence.
- 2) Remaining open to the flow of life. The practice of T'ai Chi Sphere: Eight Flows.

The icons in the inner circle reference these two internal exercises that are designed to strengthen your ability to recover your center, any time and any place and to broaden your experiential and expressive capacities.

The Eight Flows internal exercise stretches and strengthens your dynamic balance, a doorway to authentically influencing attitude, style, and presence. In particular, emphasizing the axes of Up/Down and Front/Back provide the keys to making sense of and shifting a great many seemingly unchangeable conditions.

These small shifts open the way to working directly with one of the most important teachings of India. This is the theory of the Kleshas or the Five Causes of Suffering. Cultivating the ability to shift between the balances somehow loosens the glue that binds you to the past.