



Elemental Witch: Fire, Air, Water, Earth; Discover Your Natural Affinity

By Tammy Sullivan

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Are you an Earth Witch or an Air Witch? Beginning with how to identify your personal element, the author outlines the specialties and personality quirks of each kind of elemental Witch. A detailed discussion of folklore and associated deities gives depth and color to each element's unique history. The rest of this practical text is dedicated to working magic with a particular element, while maintaining balance with all four. Magical correspondences are provided for each element, in addition to associated crystals, stones, herbs, colors, creatures, and aspects of nature (rivers, trees, caves, wind, lightning, etc.).

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Our age of specialization extends to the spiritual paths of Witches. With this new work of Sullivan's (after *Pagan Anger Magic*), those who align themselves with the divine powers of nature can discern whether earth, water, air or fire best suits their sacred expressions. Sullivan says that elemental specialties are increasingly common in contemporary Witchcraft, and that seekers can use them to personalize their spiritual paths. She compiles a list of 44 thorough and probing questions to help determine affinities and offers rituals to meet the corresponding guides. Devoting roughly a quarter of the book to each element, Sullivan delves into the personality path, (cautionary) dark side, lore, mythology, rituals, recipes, stones and herbs connected with each element. Some information seems arbitrary, e.g. "Her Water Witch home décor is usually unthemed with whimsy being the main rule," but generally Sullivan has pulled together a solid and fresh volume. It seems especially useful to have the mythology from far-flung traditions (Hindu, Yoruba, Native American, Hawaiian, etc.) pulled together under their elemental affiliations, thus creating something of a general interest read. However, this is not for rank beginners, for to fully realize the book, practitioners should already know such Witchcraft basics as how to cast circles and empower ingredients.

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About the Author

Tammy Sullivan (Tennessee) has been a practicing Witch for over a decade. Her writing has been featured in *Circle Magazine* and *Fate*, and can be found in the 2006 and 2006 Llewellyn *Herbal, Magical, and Wicca* almanacs. She is the author of *Elemental Witch* (Llewellyn), and *Pagan Anger Magic: Positive Transformations from Negative Energies* (Citadel).

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This chapter is designed to help you find your elemental preferences. The tools included are a questionnaire, meditation exercises, and vision quest instructions. There are many clues in our daily lives that can serve to reveal to us any elemental affinities we may already have. We need only to look closely at ourselves and our situations to find them.

Our health and any related problems can offer insight into our elemental affinities. The Greeks based their medical system on the four elements. Hippocrates' theory was so sound that much of it is still in use today. His influence on medicine has lasted throughout the ages, as all doctors still take the Hippocratic oath. In ancient Greek medicine, each element corresponded to a bodily fluid, called a humour. It was thought that all diseases were caused by an imbalance of the elements in the patient. We can use Hippocrates' ideas to determine if an imbalance is present within us. For instance, I am an Air Witch with liver problems. This directly corresponds with the ancient belief that air rules the liver. A little research into this subject may be very revealing about what predominant element lives within you.

The ancient Cherokees based their system of natural medicine around the elements as well. Each plant corresponded to a specific direction, and the direction specified what type of medicine the plant was to be used for. The goal was to create and maintain a balance to ward off sickness.

According to the Cherokee medicine system, the direction of east corresponded to the element of fire and was related to family, fertility, and emotions. The direction of west corresponded to water and was used in matters of internal medicine. The direction of north corresponded to the element of air and was used in

matters related to mental conditions and colds and airborne sicknesses. The direction of south corresponded to earth and was used in matters involving cuts, bruises, and external hurts.

Which Element Are You?

You can gain insight into your personal elemental affinities by asking yourself questions that cover a wide range of topics. Ask yourself many simple questions. Think of it as peeling an onion. Layer by layer you slowly reveal your core. Revealing spells have their purposes, like when it comes to remembering things we may have chosen to forget, but when it comes to determining something as deeply ingrained as an elemental affinity, you must peel, peel, and peel. If you write your answers on a single sheet of paper, one element will often appear many times. Here is a list of questions to consider:

1. What element do you feel you align with?
2. List any hobbies you have. Is there a recurrent theme?
3. Are you basically happy and content or restless and bored?
4. How are you when it comes to money matters?
5. Do you have a sharp nose for business?
6. What are your favorite food groups or preferred taste sensations? (Sweet, salty, etc.)
7. Are you an artist? If so, what medium do you prefer? (Words, paint, sculpture, etc.)
8. What is your preferred divination method? (Tarot, scrying, pendulum, etc.)
9. Do you know your aura colors?
10. Do you have past-life memories?
11. What are your preferred textures? (Satin, cotton, etc.)
12. How would you describe your musical taste? What is your favorite type of music?
13. What is your favorite kind of mood enhancer? (Aroma, music, stones, etc.)
14. Do you have any physical impairments? (Hearing, sight, smell, etc.) Do you have asthma or any other type of health condition?
15. Do you have any phobias?
16. What is your favorite activity?
17. What is your preferred reading genre? (Fantasy, horror, nonfiction, etc.)
18. How old are you?
19. What kind of imagery do you prefer? (A waterfall, roaring fire, sky scene, luxuriant garden, etc.)
20. Do you collect anything?
21. What is your favorite color?
22. Do you have a weight problem? (Are you overweight or underweight?)
23. Tell me about your space . . . Is it organized or cluttered?
24. Do you have any bad habits?
25. What color is your car?
26. Do you follow the Wiccan Rede or the Golden Rule?
27. Do you believe in the threefold law?
28. Do you have an altar? What is on it?
29. Are your rituals formal or informal?
30. Tell me about your book of shadows. Is it organized? Divided into sections? How many sections? Are the pages decorated, or is it more of a journal? Tell me all about it.
31. How do you handle anger?
32. How do you handle love?
33. Are you methodical or more free-spirited?
34. What is your Sun sign? Moon sign? Ascendant?
35. What is your profession? What do you want it to be?

36. Do you believe in ghosts? What would you consider to be proof of a haunting?
37. Do you have a totem animal? If so, what is it?
38. Is there a season of the year that you feel most in tune with?
39. Do you consider yourself a day person or a night person?
40. What mythical or fantasy creatures do you love? Which ones scare you?
41. Looking in your book of shadows, what type of spells are pre(Candles, herbs, mojo bags, etc.)
42. What color are your eyes? Your hair?
43. Where are you most comfortable? (At home, in the forest, at the beach, etc.)
44. Do you have any specific dream memories? Describe them.

Meditation

Meditation is an effective way of uncovering deep-seated elemental influences. Even people who seem to have no elemental preference can often find one if they look deeply enough. Each element offers particular lessons and insights into our world and the world beyond. You can meet the elements individually or all in one session. Before you choose a predominant element, I recommend that you first take the time to commune with that element and meet your elemental guide one-on-one.

To Meet Your Earth Guide

Set up a simple altar with a green or brown candle and herbal incense. You may wish to use a green altar cloth and your pentacle. Cast your personal circle. Take several slow, deep, cleansing breaths and relax your whole body. Close your eyes. Allow your breathing to slow and become regular. Take deep, slow breaths. Visualize the gateway to earth. Make the gate as elaborate as you wish, using any material that you desire. To open, does it swing wide? Does it lift up? Does it dissolve? Keep focused on your breath, and allow the gate to open. Relax. Walk through the gateway and down the path. Take a moment to observe the world around you. The grass is a beautiful emerald green. There are flowering trees and shrubs everywhere you look. The nearby hillsides are covered with flowers and green, healthy grass. As you walk, you notice a figure in the distance. Walk toward it. Stay focused on your breath. Standing in front of you is your guide for exploring the elemental realm of earth. It could be an animal, a human, or a mythical creature. Greet your guide. Listen to what he has to say. When you have heard all you wish, thank him. Always respect your guide, as he will be with you a long time. Slowly walk back up the pathway to the gate. Focus on your breath. Walk through the gate and see it close. Allow yourself a few more deep breaths and then open your eyes. Write down what you learned in a journal for safekeeping. Close your circle.

To Meet Your Air Guide

Create a simple altar with a yellow cloth, a blue candle, and an air type of incense. (Lavender or mint work very well.) You may wish to place feathers or a bell on the altar. Cast your personal circle. Take several deep, cleansing breaths. Close your eyes. Visualize the elemental gateway to the realm of air. Make the gate as elaborate as you wish. How does the gate open? Relax and focus on your breath. See the gate open, and walk through it. Before you is a pathway woven together out of fluffy white clouds. Begin to walk down the path. Take a few moments to observe the world around you. You can see clear skies to your right; they are a beautiful crystal blue. To your left you can see rumbling storm clouds in the distance, and lightning flashes inside of them. Continue on your way. In the distance you see a figure. It is your guide for the elemental realm of air. Walk to him. Focus on your breath. Greet your guide and listen to what he has to say. When you have heard all you wish, thank your guide. Begin to walk back to the gateway. Focus on your breath. Walk through the gateway and see it close. Take a few deep breaths and then open your eyes. Write down what you learned in your journal, and close your personal circle.

To Meet Your Water Guide

Create a simple altar with a bowl of water and floating blue candles. Use a rain-scented incense. You may keep a chalice filled with wine or a favorite herbal tea on the altar. Take several deep, cleansing breaths. Cast your personal circle. Close your eyes. Visualize the gateway to the elemental realm of water. What does it look like? How does it open? Focus on your breath. Keep your breathing deep, slow, and steady. See the gate open, and walk through it. Amazingly, you find yourself walking across the bottom of the sea, yet you can still breathe easily, encased in your own personal bubble. The sand is firm under your feet. Around you are bright coral shells, starfish, sea horses, and dolphins. Schools of brightly colored fish swim by. Walk slowly toward the figure you see in the distance. Focus on your breath. You are calm, relaxed, and happy. Greet your elemental guide for the realm of water, and listen to what he has to say. When you have heard all you wish, thank him. Begin to walk back toward the gateway. Stay focused on your breath as you take one last look at the beautiful world beneath the waves. Walk through the gateway and see it close. Take several deep breaths and then open your eyes slowly. Write down what you learned in your journal. Close your circle.

To Meet Your Fire Guide

Create a simple altar with an orange cloth and a red candle. Use an amber- or wood-scented incense. Take several deep, cleansing breaths. Get comfortable. Focus on your breathing, and close your eyes. Visualize the gateway to the elemental realm of fire. Make the gate as strong and elaborate as you wish. How does it open? Take several slow, deep breaths. See the gate open, and walk through it. Everything is dark. Before you is a pathway illuminated with candles on each side. It is a broad, safe pathway. Begin to walk down it. Slowly, stars become visible in the dark sky. Take a moment to appreciate the twinkling lights. Focus on the candle flames and note that no two are exactly alike. They dance in various colors on the tips of the candles. You feel warm, safe, and happy. Focus on your breath. Further on down the path you see your elemental guide for the realm of fire. Approach him slowly and greet him warmly. Listen to what he has to say. When you have heard all you wish, thank him and turn to go back up the path. As you approach the gateway, notice that it is still open. Walk through it. Take several slow, deep breaths and then open your eyes. Write down all you learned in your journal. Close your personal circle.

Opening the elemental gateways can allow you to learn more about the elements and the sacred knowledge they contain. When determining an elemental affinity, opening the gateway of an element allows you the confidence to be positive of your choice before aligning with the element. Also, once aligned, you still have the option to switch your focus to another element entirely, should you need to do so.

One way to open the elemental gateways is to meditate on the ancient symbols of the elements, or tattwas (see next page). The tattwas are symbols that are considered to be keys to the subconscious and collective conscious of the universe. The easiest way to put a tattwa to use is to stare at it, unblinking, until the image is burned into your mind. Then close your eyes, and, using the image held in your mind, your subconscious will open the gateway.

Opening the Gateways Simultaneously

After a suitable meditation time with the tattwas, when you feel you are ready, stand and face north. Visualize the northern gate with the tattwa of earth carved upon it. The entry can be a golden gateway or a monolithic stone structure, or even a simple wooden gate. Stare into the tattwa until its aura begins to become visible, then shift your focus to the gateway. You should begin to see the fog lift, and the portal will become clear. It may look like a swirling vortex at first, but it will eventually take on a form that represents that element. Turn east and repeat the process. Continue with all four of the elements if you wish, or you may choose to open only one gateway at a time. If you wish, you may protect yourself with a personal bubble and

enter into the realm of the element. Be sure to ask that the gate remain open. Explore and commune as long as you like. When you are done, make sure to close each gateway by allowing your vision to blur as you look at it. The vortex should become active again, and the fog will settle.

Vision Questing

A vision quest is no easy task to accomplish, but it will open your eyes to many things in this world that you had not noticed before. A vision quest pushes the body, mind, and soul to the extreme, where they all meet and come together. It is essential for all parts of ourselves to be in harmony with each other and with nature.

It is not necessary to do a full eight-day vision quest to discover your elemental affinity, but if you wish to you certainly can. I recommend the following quest, which is simpler and more harmonious to our roles in daily life. At this point, you should have some idea of which element you prefer.

1. Fast on juice and water for one day while you meditate and focus on your personal elemental characteristics.
2. Early the next morning, set out for a long walk. Plan to spend the whole day communing with nature. Take only water with you. If you can arrange to camp out for the night, so much the better. If not, spend at least an hour focusing on the Earth itself. Notice the differences in grass blades, dirt types, and tree barks.
3. Open up a dialog in your head with one of the elements, asking it all you wish to know. Do the same with the other three elements in turn.
4. Do not allow yourself to sleep that night, if possible. Spend it communing with the elements instead.
5. Keep an eye out for a sign, be it a hawk flying that catches your attention or a special star twinkling. Your personal element will reveal itself in a unique way.
6. When you return home, honor yourself and the element that came to you with a ritual. You do not have to dedicate yourself to a particular element in order to learn more about it. Simply ask that element to show you more, and remember to say thank you. Courtesy and respect go a long way.
7. Bless yourself with a simple statement of intent. Say something like, I am blessed within the eyes of my Lord and Lady. Throughout this entire process, do not be afraid to cry and laugh. A successful vision quest is a highly charged emotional task and quite an accomplishment.

If it is possible for you to do a full eight-day vision quest, the process is more elaborate, as follows:

1. There is a three-day preparation period, during which you spend all of your time searching for your personal element by discussing your personality and viewpoints with the universe or whomever happens to be around. Every topic that pops into your mind is appropriate, so be sure to keep accurate notes. You swim to soak up water energy, practice breathing techniques to soak up air energy, lie on the ground to soak up earth energy, and allow the sun to shine on you to soak up fire energy. This time is meant to prepare you for your task.
2. For the next three days, go out into nature alone, with no food, only water. Fast, meditate, commune with the elements, and do a great amount of personal reflection. Stay out in the wild until you see your sign, your vision, of your personal element. On the fourth morning, you may return home. During this time period, you are allowed nothing that does not come from nature itself and no food. Physical activity is encouraged. If you see your sign before the fourth day, it is a personal choice whether to stay on the journey or to return home. Let your instincts guide your choice.
3. When you return home, hold a ceremony of rebirth, for you have been reborn into your element. Traditional Native American rites call for a sweat lodge cleansing, but this can also be done with smudging.

To smudge yourself, light a smudging stick or burn sage on a charcoal tablet. Pass your arms through the smoke, then your legs, and so on, until you have exposed your whole body to the cleansing effect of the sage smoke. After the cleansing, it's time to write your story.

4. Perform a rite of honor, such as a ritual bath with all the trappings.

If you have performed all of these steps and are still not sure which element is best to work with, study the four Elemental Witch path chapters and continue the meditations. Your element will eventually reveal itself; it just may choose to wait a bit until the time is right.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Dorothy Jaramillo:

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