



# 36 Ways to Strengthen the Feminine (Yin) in Leadership and Consulting Practice

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The best way to integrate the strength of the feminine into leadership and consulting is by a positive intent to do so. With that orientation, we can see opportunities. However, sometimes deliberately practicing a new mindset and behaviour leads us into new ways.

Here is a list of conventional approaches and then possible actions that are more on the yin side. None of these (left or right column) are gender-bound of course, all these choices are best situational. Discernment and judgement are always required.

Conventional Approach	Alternatives and Supplementary Ways...
<b>OUR MINDSET</b>	
1 Be perfect and right at every step	<i>Mistakes are okay. We learn from them</i>
2 Judge input by how well people express themselves	<i>Listen carefully for the signal/truth in what someone is saying</i>
3 Categorize, box and judge	<i>Look for dynamics and relationships -- the movement of ideas, networks, attractors. Avoid absolutes</i>
4 Take problems apart, and solve the parts	<i>Maintain view of the whole, and systems within systems</i>
5 Seek better answers	<i>Seek better questions</i>
6 Identify contradictions to resolve them	<i>Hold contradictions lightly and seek to understand them</i>
7 Go faster	<i>Go slower</i>
8 Think short term and where we want to be in 3 months or a year	<i>Think long term, generationally and what choices serve those not here</i>
9 Be right	<i>Be effective</i>
10 Feel we have to defend ourselves	<i>Welcome other perspectives, understand what's of concern</i>
11 Teach what we know	<i>Help others learn</i>
<b>OUR PROCESS</b>	
12 See organizations as machine-like	<i>Understand that organizations are living systems</i>
13 Pay attention to the business model and bottom line	<i>Attend inordinately to people and culture.</i>
14 In perspective, start from us, the organization, and what we want	<i>In perspective, start in the external environment and then pare down, so intentional, informed decisions on scope</i>

Conventional Approach	Alternatives and Supplementary Ways...
15 Promote and affirm the corporate culture	<i>Invite principled interrogation of norms, practices, and policies</i>
16 Compete to win	<i>Collaborate to serve and do better work</i>
17 Target the audience	<i>Honour the stakeholders</i>
18 Look only at the hard data and numerical trends, formal reports	<i>Seek warm data (ref. N. Bateson), i.e. the transcontextual experience underlying the data. Numbers are limited views</i>
19 Relate to the C-Suite and decision-makers	<i>Include next tier leadership and young people in most if not all processes</i>
20 Expect people to cope with fallout on how things will affect them	<i>Hear concerns and consider ways in which things can be modified</i>
21 Be passionate and hot in expression	<i>Be cool, pace things to increase understanding and trust</i>
22 Plan education	<i>Gamify. Use scenarios and stories to increase engagement</i>
23 Spin the narrative we want told	<i>Co-create the narrative – what are our metaphors and what story are we writing?</i>
24 Carry on to get things done	<i>Build reflective processes into everything</i>
<b>OUR MEETINGS</b>	
25 Start with business	<i>Start with values</i>
26 Stick to the agenda	<i>Work with what comes up and if tangential, note on “parking lot” for follow up</i>
27 Keep things moving	<i>Create space for processing, for people to “reset”</i>
28 Set a business-like tone	<i>Welcome people into the space with a music choice. Use breaks to infuse energy</i>
29 Use words and charts	<i>Use metaphors, stories and infographics</i>
30 Present things ourselves	<i>Let others take the stage. Support them</i>
31 Be long-winded telling people about an area we know well	<i>First ask what questions people have and what topics they hope we cover</i>
32 Put words in someone else’s mouth or take over as in “what I hear you trying to say...”	<i>Let someone finish their thoughts as they wish to express them</i>
33 Jump into silences	<i>Let silences linger. Breathe instead</i>
34 Start into a meeting’s business right away	<i>Invite client or team members to check in. If time-pressed, split into triads, or do a short mindfulness exercise to help people become present together</i>
35 See who has questions or comments and relate to them	<i>Invite a round of comment so everyone has a turn (noting questions as we go)</i>
36 Persuade and debate	<i>Dialogue, seek common ground and possibility space</i>

- Lyn McDonell, C. Dir, FCMC, The Accountability Group, Inc. for Webinar “Maximizing Feminine Traits,” CMC-Ontario and the Canadian Association of Management Consultants (CMC-Canada), March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022