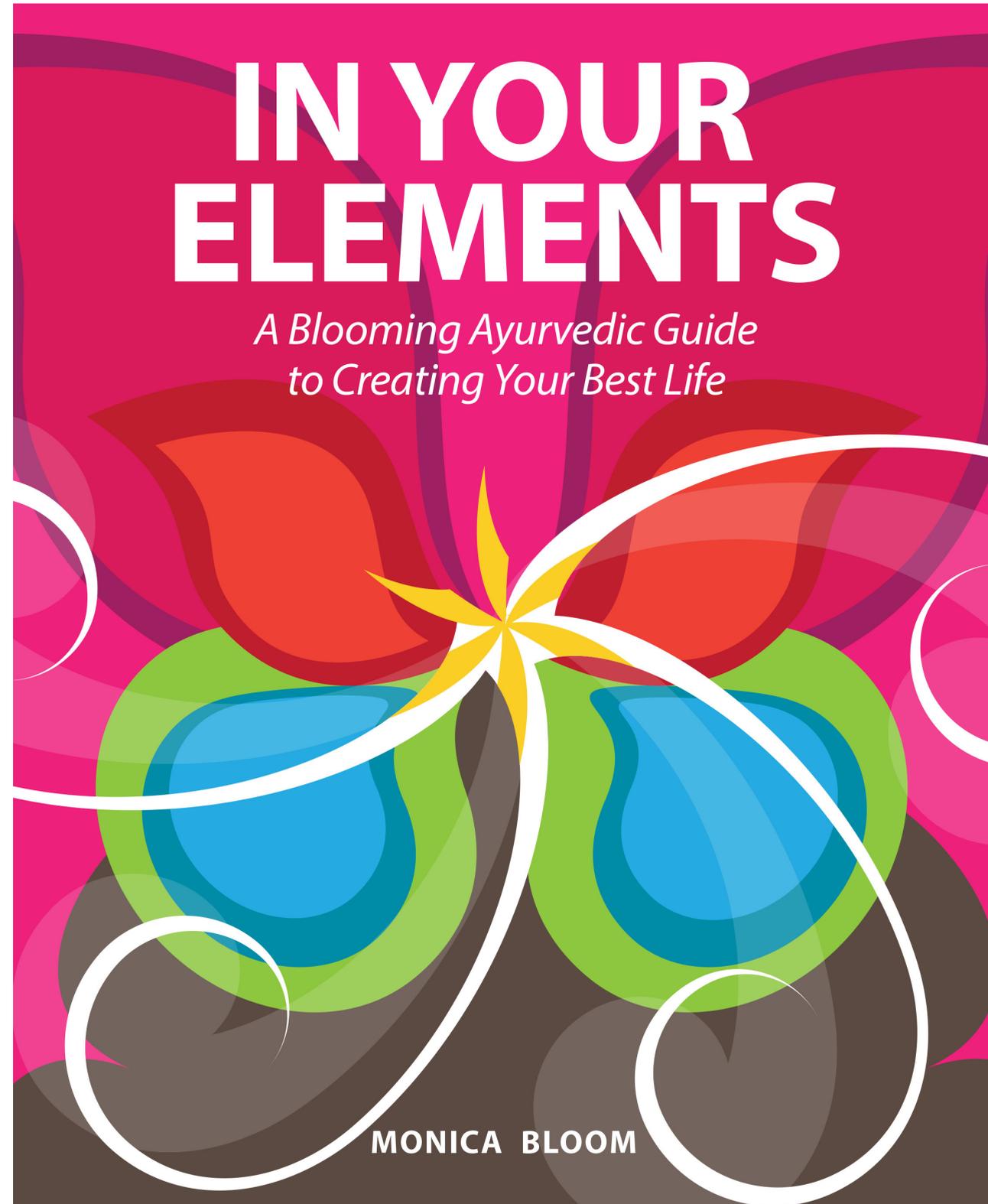
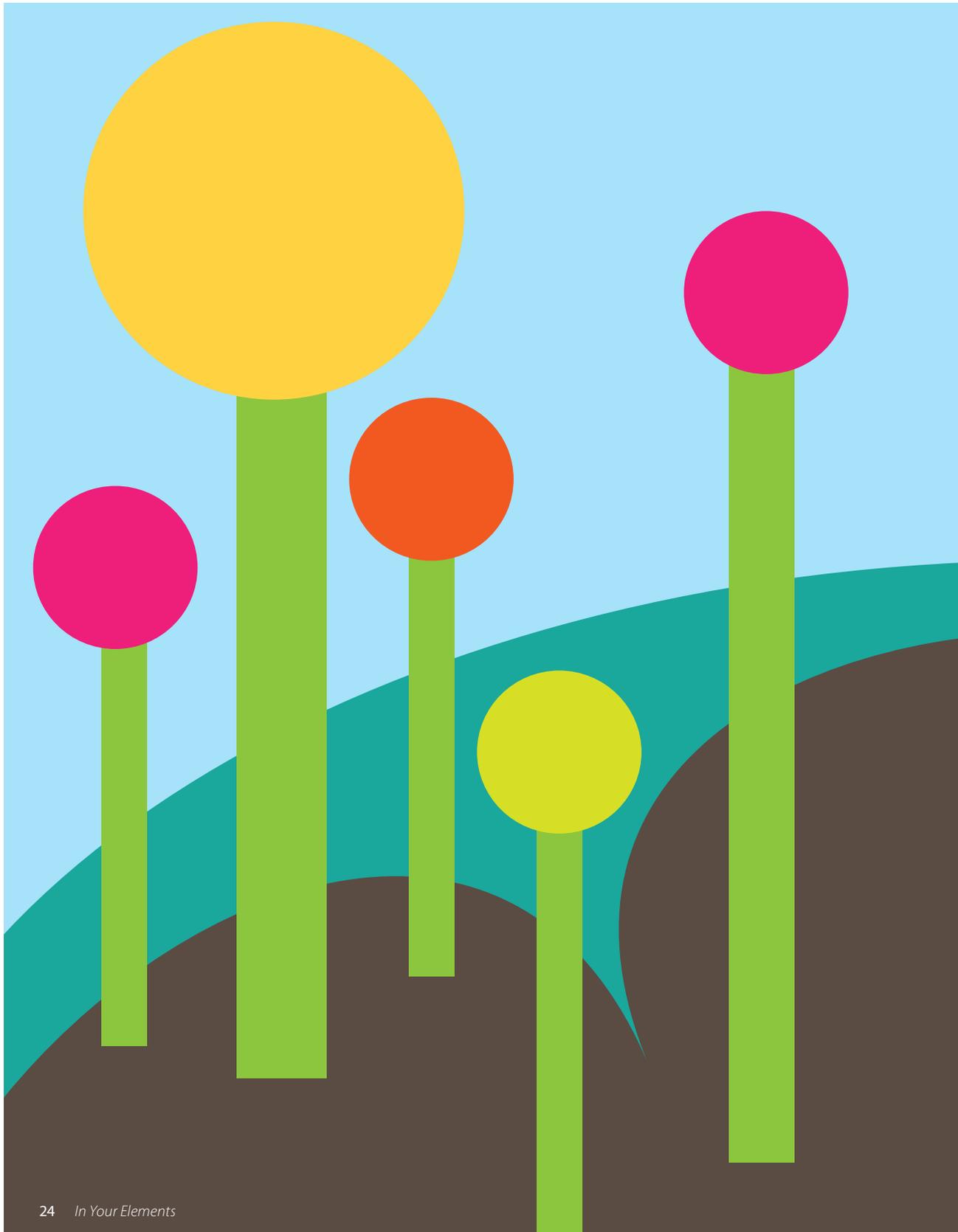


# IN YOUR ELEMENTS

*A Blooming Ayurvedic Guide  
to Creating Your Best Life*

MONICA BLOOM





# Get grounded

## THE FOUNDATION

You are probably rarin' to go so let's get into the ground rules to ensure you have a solid foundation. Only when your roots are planted can you sprout, bloom and expand! The Ayurvedic ground rules are:

**MACROCOSM AND MICROCOSM**

**IT DEPENDS**

**ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL**

**LIKE INCREASES LIKE**

**DO NOT RESIST YOUR URGES**

**SLOWLY WE MAKE THE CHANGES**

**YOU ARE WHAT YOU DIGEST**

**HEAL THROUGH THE FIVE SENSES**

**MIND, BODY, SPIRIT ARE TOGETHER**

**FOOD IS MY MEDICINE**

## WE ARE NATURE — MACROCOSM AND MICROCOSM

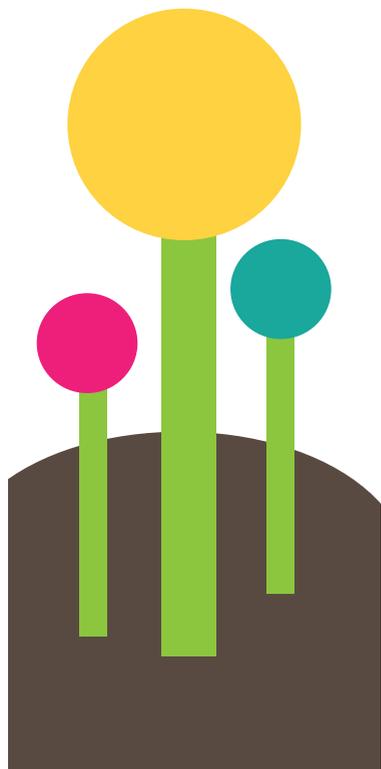
Here's something you might not have thought of: Humans, the universe, and everything in between is made of only five things. Yep, just five. Those five things are the great elements: space, air, fire, water and earth. Ayurvedic philosophy says everything found in outer space, on Earth, all the way down to our teeniest weeniest cells is made of just those five things!

### A few examples include:

- outer space or holes in things (space) • wind (air) • fires (fire)
- rain, oceans and lakes (water) • the mountains and ground (earth)

### Now think about your body. You have:

- holey parts (space) • parts that move other parts (air) • warm parts (fire)
- liquid parts (water) • hard parts (earth)



It might be a little hard to imagine that everything is made of just five elements, but it is similar to understanding that all paint colors can be created from red, blue and yellow. If you started mixing the elements on a palette, you would get an endless variety of everything you see. A tree, for example is a mixture of elements. A tree has earth element in the dense trunk but there is also some space between the bark on its bumpy texture. The leaves have water in them to keep them soft as the veins move air and water through the leaf. Trees absorb sunlight, so they have a little fire in them as well. Pretty nifty, right? A tree has: space, air, fire, water and earth.

**In Ayurveda, all of nature is made from and governed by the five great elements: space, air, fire, water and earth.**

Spending time in nature is a prescription to heal in Ayurveda. While we are all unique, one thing stays true for all of us: we feel best when we spend time in nature because we ARE nature.

## LIFE CHECK NATURE

Name some things that are close to nature.

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Name some things that are far from nature, or unnatural.

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Do you spend at least 30 minutes a day in nature?

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If not, how can you fit in more time in nature?

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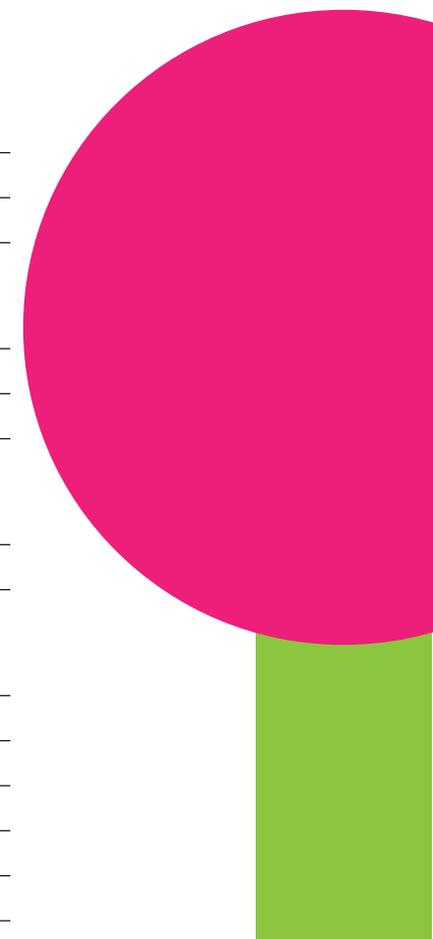
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## nature

Ever notice that roots and branches look just like each other? It's the same structure on each end. The roots need to be firmly planted in order to grow the top.



# IT DEPENDS.

# ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL



## IT DEPENDS

Because Ayurveda's focus is on the individual, we use this phrase all the time "it depends!" The solution to your health concerns depend on: your unique balance of the elements; your age; the problem; how long you've had the problem; what season it is; your diet; your exercise regimen; your emotional stability; your stress levels; and so on. Ayurvedic practitioners will take time to understand their patient. That is why when posted with a health question, Ayurvedic practitioners first response is, "It depends." Ayurveda does not treat disease it treats the person.

## ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

Do you remember that store Au Coton from the '80s? They sold only cotton clothes and the entire store was "one size fits all." Um. No they didn't! None of those clothes fit me. I looked like a fluffy pleated pastel sausage in everything and it made me feel BAD because that meant that I was not part of "all" like everyone else! What a bummer. What an outsider. What a sausage.

So hear me out, while one person might feel awesome after scarfing (we do not scarf in Ayurveda, we chew very well) an entire burrito, another person might get bloated, and yet another will burp up that burrito up for hours. It does not have as much to do with the burrito as much as it does with the person eating it. The first person might have a really strong digestive fire, and able to digest (metabolize if you want to be Western) it just fine. The second person might have a weaker digestive fire and the beans will make them puffy-gutted. The third person might have additional heat in their body and the spicy salsa is rising (like heat does) and trying to come out. \*burp\* Because each one of these people are totally unique, a burrito may or may not be a good choice.

That's just one example, but there are bajillions. The same goes with exercise as people have different thresholds, abilities, flexibilities, strengths, etc., Not everyone is going to benefit from (or love) long distance running. Not everyone is going to benefit from strength training either. Even yoga, which is generally good for all people as a physical exercise and practice, offers different styles to benefit different people. Hot-bodied people should never ever ever do hot yoga! They'll get angry and pass out. Trust me.

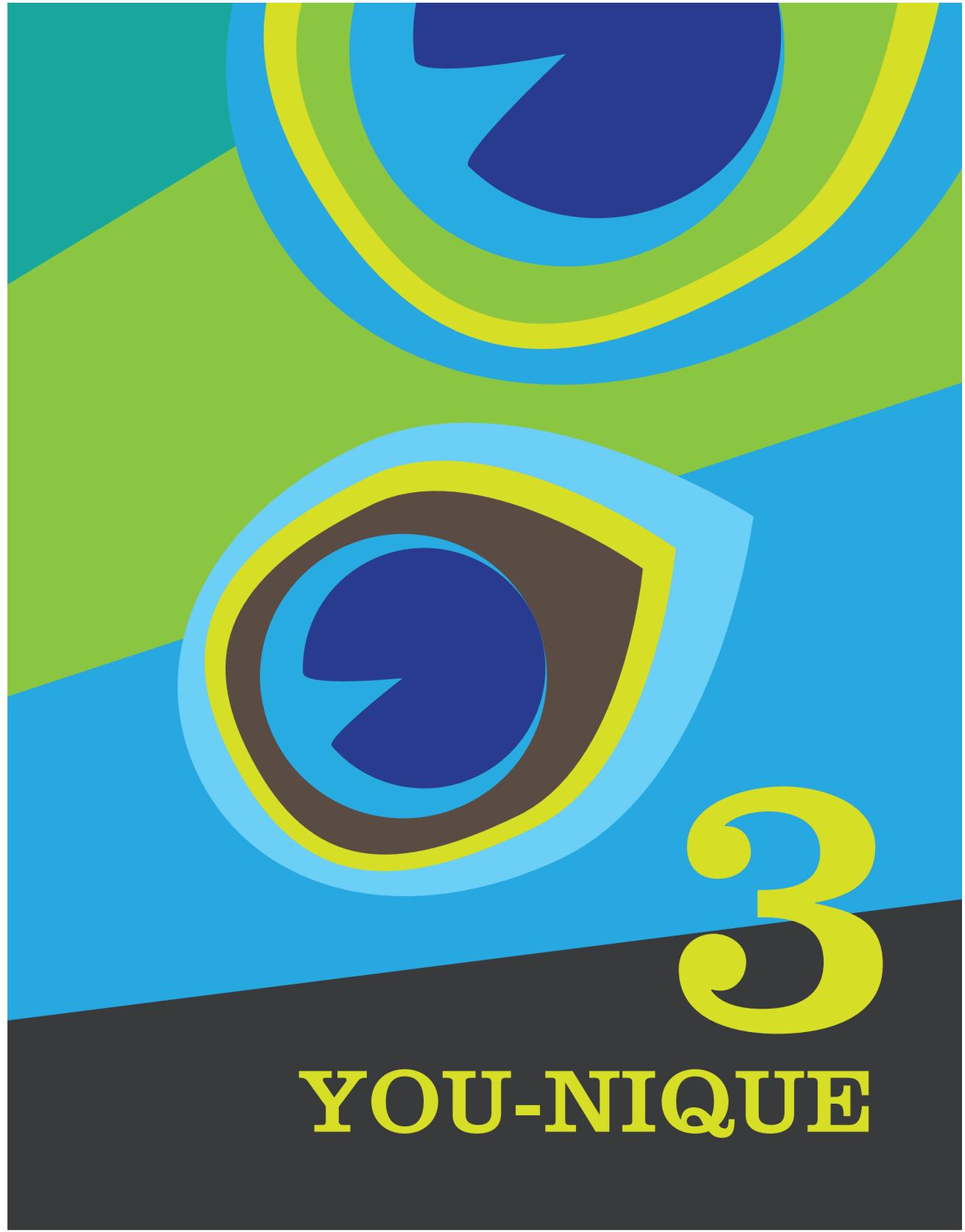
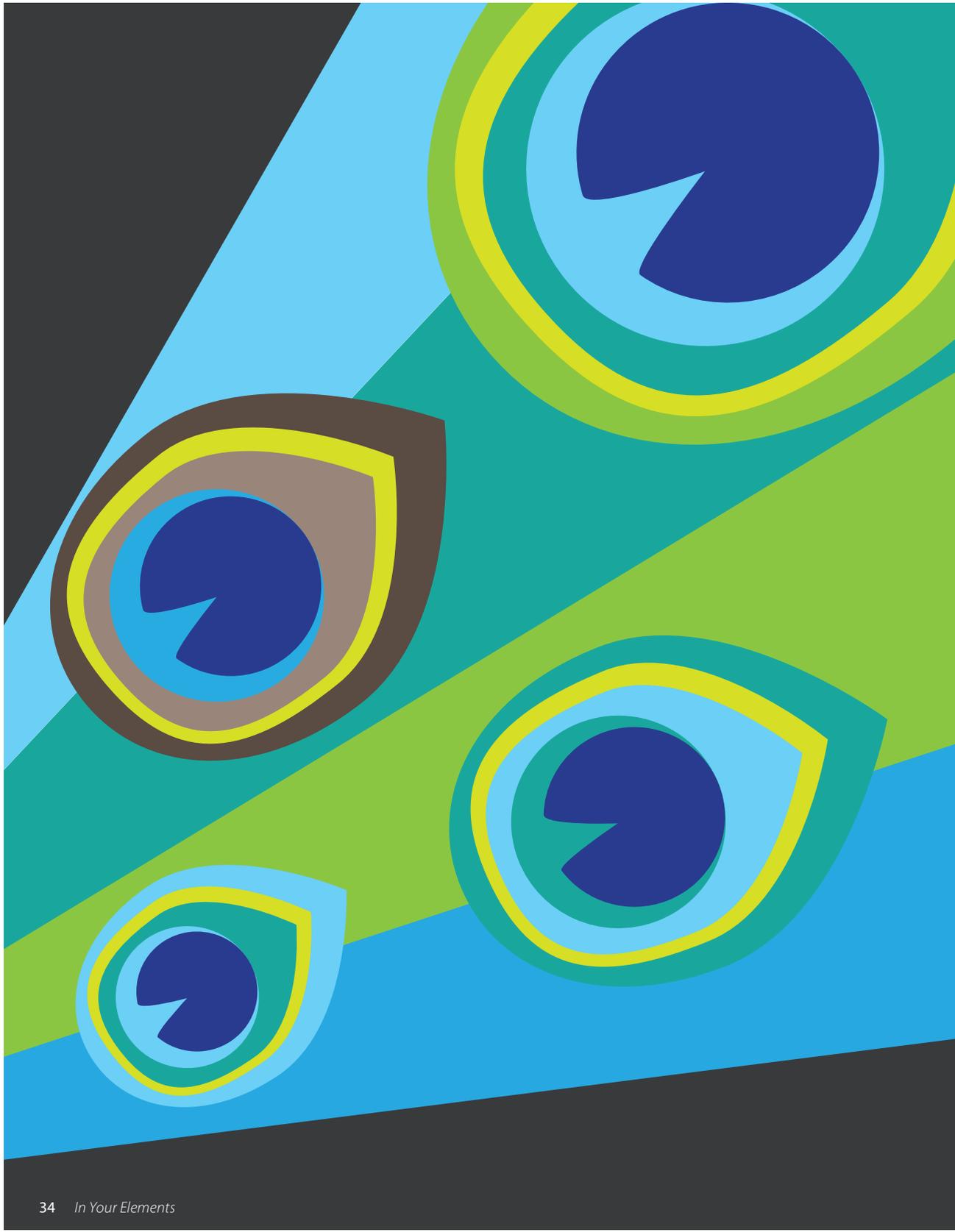
Overall, blanket statements given to us about diet, exercise and how to stay balanced, should wave a red flag. One size does not fit all. If someone claims "this will work for everyone!" be dubious. Kleenex® will work for everyone, but that's about it. Unless you have stubble, then the Kleenex will get stuck to the stubble and — see, not even Kleenex!

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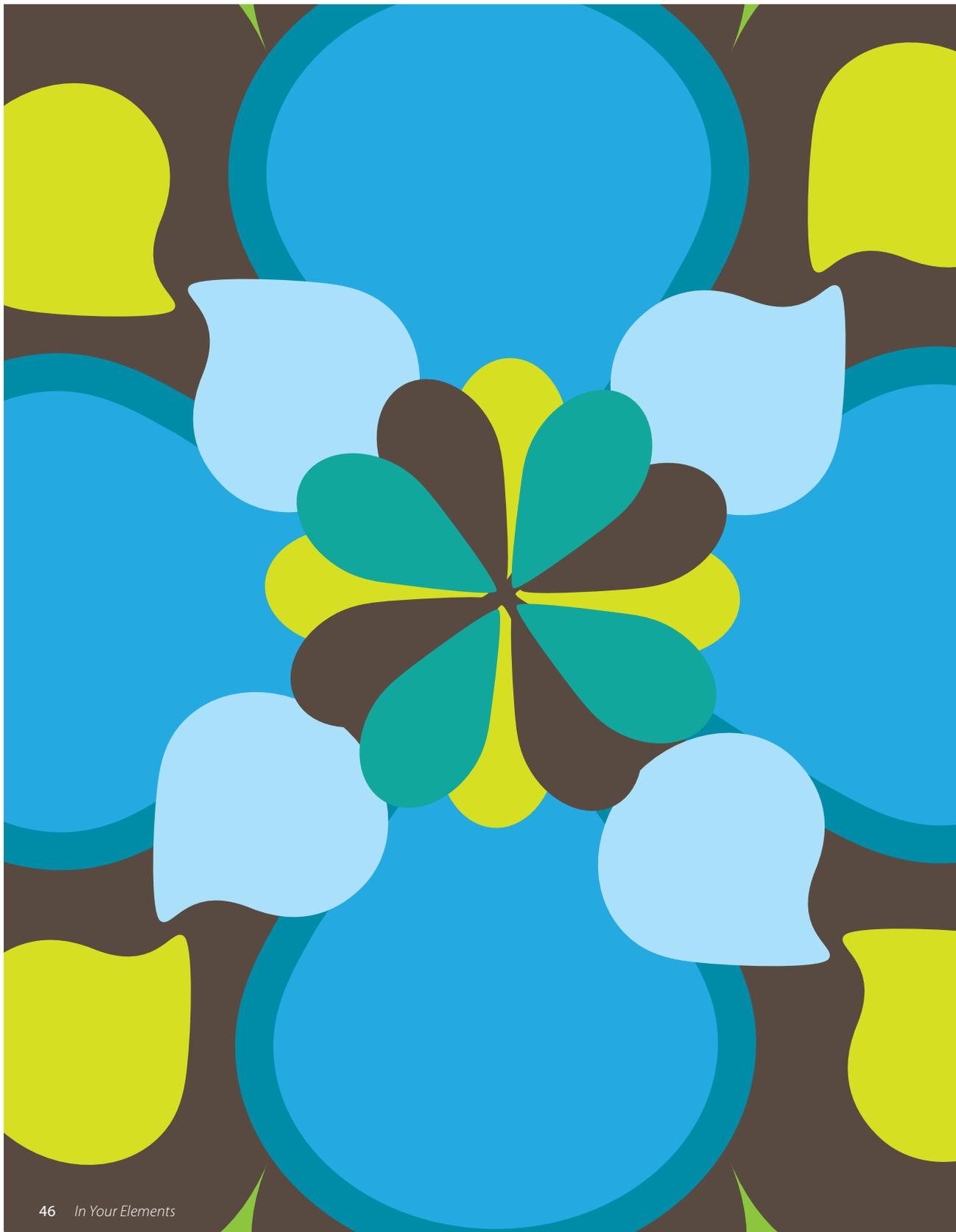
## truth

Authentic Ayurveda should not "sell" you anything. There are some great Ayurvedic products out there but just like anything else, be wary of any claims that "this one thing will change your entire life" because nothing is true for all people in all cases. As Ayurveda becomes more popular (cause people love it!) be mindful of persuasive marketing so you don't do more harm than good.

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**YOU-NIQUE**



## KAPHA THE ENERGY OF LUBRICATION AND STRUCTURE

**Temperment:** steady and nurturing

**Elements:** water + earth

**Qualities:** cold, wet, heavy, static, dense, dull

**Season:** spring

**Nature:** moon

**Main location:** stomach and chest

Kapha dosha creates our physical building blocks and is responsible for keeping our tissues strong and supple. Kapha is our lubrication, mucus, reproductive fluids and is responsible for building our tissues. It is the glue that binds the body together. Kapha is creation! Kapha nurtures and supports vata and pitta — mentally, emotionally and physically.

Kaphas have a solid or voluptuous build and though they have a strong presence, they are soft-spoken and shy. Kapha-type people are very strong, jolly, sweet and highly structured in both mind and body. They have thick porcelain skin (they don't wrinkle easily!) and thick hair. Their eyes are round with thick eyelashes and they have a strong bright smile. Kaphas are the sturdiest of the three doshas capable of handling a lot of work with endless patience. Since kaphas are made of water and earth, they are heavy and slow in nature, so it takes them a very long time to get out of balance and a very long time to come back into balance.

**Kapha personality.** Everybody loves a kapha! Balanced kaphas are peacemakers, empathetic caretakers, joyous hosts and give the best hugs, ever. They are always happy, extremely tolerant, patient and they are the first ones to offer a helping hand. Kaphas love to cheerlead — their faces and hearts light up with pride when others succeed. Their mind is steady, their attitude is positive and their bodies are very strong. Their presence allows others to rest easy because kaphas will never judge, they always listen, and rarely get angry. Kaphas are happiest when they are in a warm, dry climate and when engaged in light activities like gardening, cooking, or knitting. They are powerful singers — healthy lubrication around the vocal chords makes them a natural.

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### *dosha fun*

Without kapha, vata and pitta would be a windy inferno. Kapha cools the heat and calms the wind, balancing the two with cooling nourishment so they don't burn everything up.

Kaphas are the healthiest of the three doshas because they have such a strong foundation. They do not ride an emotional roller-coaster like a vata, nor do they carry stress like a pitta.

If you have someone in your life/family that you call the "glue," chances are they are a kapha.

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### how to spot a kapha

- Large frame, big bones, strong joints
- Round face, big eyes, lush lashes, button nose (face of an angel)
- Strong nails, big knuckles
- Skin is cool, moist and thick
- Skin color is even, complexion is pure
- Thick, wavy, oily hair
- Often shy, quiet and listen more than they talk
- Strong endurance
- Very patient, slow moving
- Can be lazy or a “couch potato”
- Would rather follow than lead
- Puts everyone else first
- Often work in hospitality or service jobs. Secretaries, nurses, chefs, construction workers, human resources.



Kaphas do not like change and feel most comfortable in their routine. They frequent the same restaurants, order the same entrée over and over, and might not move far from their hometown. Kaphas take a very long time to make a decision. A little on the lazy side, they would rather someone else make decisions so all they have to do is follow. You might hear a kapha say, “Whatever you think!” or “I’ll follow your lead.” Give kapha a list of projects to do and consider it done. Kaphas have strong endurance but can overextend themselves, leaving nothing left to nourish themselves. They are the ultimate people pleasers and have a hard time saying “no” because they don’t like to upset others, create conflict, or stir the pot. They will often take on way too much just to keep the peace. However, if kaphas don’t ask for reprieve, they might take on “poor me” syndrome and that negative weight can be felt by everyone. It is not easy to exhaust or upset a kapha, but once you’ve upset a them, they get downright mean and hold a grudge. The best thing kaphas can do is ask for what they need. Others will always assume they are OK because of their happy-go-lucky nature, so kaphas need to ask!

**Kapha out of balance.** Kaphas are prone to imbalances like weight gain, lethargy, cloudiness of mind, cystic acne, allergies, increased mucus, water retention and depression. Kaphas can get lonely if they don’t have enough “people” time. Being with others invigorates kaphas — they feel lighter and inspired when in the company of vivacious vatas or strategic-thinking pittas. Because of their heavy and static nature, it is easy for kapha to collect things.

**Kapha needs.** Kapha appetite and metabolism is slow, so they should skip a meal to remain content and happy. Fasting is necessary for kaphas because it gives their low digestive fire a chance to catch up and process any old food stuffs hanging around. Kapha is watery, so they need to soak up the excess water with airy and dry foods (veggies, fruits, salads, legumes). A light, warm, spicy vegetarian diet is best for kapha to heat them up and keep them light on their feet.

Kaphas love to shop the sales and buy things in multiples! They are the ones to buy three pairs of the same jeans in different colors or seven of the same spatula because they were on bulk discount. One of the best things kapha can do for themselves is lighten the load from past emotions and material things.

Kaphas are the most emotional dosha and cry the most easily (all that water in them comes right out). Go to a kapha for emotional support but not for a strategic plan of action. Kaphas brighten up and gain a spring in their step when surrounded by the lively energy of a vata. Kaphas have strong admiration for pitta’s strong abilities to lead the way.

**KAPHAS GET IMBALANCED BY: HEAVY EMOTIONS, EXCESS FOOD, EXCESS MATERIAL THINGS, LACK OF PHYSICAL MOVEMENT.**

**KAPHAS NEED: LIGHTNESS, WARMTH, MOVEMENT, DRYNESS AND SPICE.**

**A GOOD MANTRA FOR KAPHAS IS: “LET GO OF WHATEVER DOES NOT SERVE ME” AND “GET UP AND DANCE!”**

### LIFE CHECK FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Who are the kaphas in your life?

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### dosha fun

Kaphas have a tendency to grab a hold of something and stick there forever, including emotions (grudges!), the past, people, relationships and collections of “stuff.” Kaphas love stuff.

Kaphas can hold in heat but they don’t generate heat. If a kapha is warm, they do not cool off very fast.





# I AM UNLIKE ANYONE I KNOW



## LIFE CHECK DOSHA TEST

### 01. PHYSIQUE

- v) Slender, hardly gain weight
- p) Medium build with good muscle tone
- k) Well built, curvy and tend to gain weight easily

PRAKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_ VIKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_

### 02. SKIN

- v) Olive, dry, thin and itches often
- p) Pink, flushed and/or moles and freckles
- k) Porcelain, smooth and soft

PRAKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_ VIKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_

### 03. HAIR

- v) Dry, thin, brittle and/or frizzy
- p) Silky and straight, early graying or receding hairline
- k) Thick, full, lustrous, wavy and slightly oily

PRAKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_ VIKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_

### 04. FACE

- v) Oval and thin
- p) Triangular with sharp features (pointed chin, prominent jaw line)
- k) Round and soft features

PRAKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_ VIKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_

### 05. EYES

- v) Small, they feel dry often (usually brown)
- p) Medium, almond shaped, penetrating (usually blue or green)
- k) Big, round in shape, moist, full eyelashes (any color)

PRAKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_ VIKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_

### 06. HANDS

- v) Dry, rough, slender fingers and knuckles; dry, thin nails
- p) Moist, pink, medium fingers and knuckles; pink soft nails
- k) Firm; thick fingers and knuckles; strong and smooth nails

PRAKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_ VIKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_

### 07. JOINTS

- v) Small, prominent bones and often crack
- p) Medium and loose
- k) Large sturdy with lots of muscle surrounding

PRAKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_ VIKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_

### 08. ACTIVITIES

- v) Very active, always on the go, multi-tasking, constantly thinking
- p) I like to think before I do anything
- k) I am steady and graceful, don't like to rush

PRAKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_ VIKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_

### 09. DECISIONS

- v) I take leaps of faith often without much information
- p) I ask lots of questions and gain full clarity before making a decision
- k) I take a long time to decide and/or prefer someone else make the decision

PRAKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_ VIKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_

### 10. PACE

- v) I walk fast and talk fast
- p) My actions are very thoughtful and precise
- k) I like a slower pace, enjoy my process, and take my time to accomplish things

PRAKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_ VIKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_

### 11. SLEEP

- v) Tend to toss and turn, I wake up early
- p) Light sleeper but if I wake me up, I can go back to sleep easily
- k) Heavy sleeper

PRAKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_ VIKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_

### 12. APPETITE

- v) Sometimes hungry, sometimes not, I feel anxious or weak if I don't eat
- p) I always feel hungry, if I don't eat I get irritable and angry
- k) I don't feel very hungry, I can easily skip meals

PRAKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_ VIKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_

### 13. POOP

- v) I tend to have constipation and go a day or two without pooping
- p) I poop more than once every day and sometimes poops are loose
- k) I poop every day and it's usually consistent

PRAKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_ VIKRUTI: \_\_\_\_\_

# In Ayurveda, imbalances are the result of only three categories

- 1) WRONG CHOICES, MISTAKEN INTELLECT
- 2) MISUSE OF THE SENSES
- 3) THE EFFECTS OF TIME

## WRONG CHOICES

There is a wise, little part of our mind called buddhi (*boo-DEE*). Buddhi is our inner wisdom, kind of like the “good angel” sitting on our shoulder whispering the right things to do in your ear. Our buddhi always helps us adhere to choices that would be best for us, whether big or small. When we listen to our buddhi we feel accomplished, are highly productive and are more likely to make the right choices by following through with right action.

If we do not listen to our buddhi, we will not make the right choices, which is the root cause of all kinds of problems. It’s like there’s a waterfall effect for bad-choice-making. One thing leads to another.

### You did not listen to your buddhi

Let me be dramatic for a sec. After a wonderfully tantalizing meal, you are full, but the food was so good you want a second helping. Buddhi says, “One helping is enough or you will feel overfull.” You know you don’t need a second helping, but it was just so tasty! Against buddhi’s advice, you have a second helping. That second serving pushed you into a food coma and now you are too lethargic to take your 30-minute evening walk.

Instead, you veg in front of the TV watching *House Hunters*. You feel disappointed in yourself and are irritated by small closets being a deal breaker, so you watch more TV (*Shark Tank*, anyone?) and you are still very full. The night is already shot anyway so who cares. Since the TV is an addicting little bugger, you might stay up past your 10 p.m. Ayurvedic bedtime, and as the night goes on, you get snacky. Buddhi says, “don’t do it! Just go to bed!” But you reach for the chocolates anyway because your sweet tooth is calling for it. Besides, you already screwed up the night. You get a sugar surge, so you stay up even later and have restless sleep because of the caffeine in the chocolates. You have a hard time waking up the next morning because your belly is still full from the night before. And then you wake up feeling like physical junk from too much food, guilt from watching too much TV and staying up too late. And all because you made the wrong choices — this was nobody else’s fault.

## The results of making wrong choices

You over ate. You watched too much TV (an energy drainer and can cause insomnia). You stayed up too late. Your food was not digested properly and not digesting food thoroughly is the easiest way to gain weight and build-up toxins. Bummer.

Get my point? Wrong choices are responsible for SO many health problems. Start making better ones — it’s totally in your control. Your wisdom is already there, you have it. It’s just waiting for you to listen and act.

## LIFE CHECK WRONG CHOICES

List examples of choices you make that you know are not good for you (be honest, nobody is judging).

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What are the results of those wrong choices?

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## misusing the senses:

- smoking
- very cold or very hot showers
- too much computer, TV or smart phone
- eating on the go
- eating too much
- eating foods that are too salty, too sugary, too tasty
- loud concerts
- the perfume section of a department store
- inhaling industrial fumes
- loud traffic
- loud construction noise
- not getting enough hugs
- driving while eating, drinking coffee and smoking while texting (highly dangerous, don’t do it!)

# psst...are you sleeping?

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## two types of insomnia:

- 1) Not being able to fall asleep: a pitta problem caused by high stress.
- 2) Waking up in the middle of the night and not being able to fall back to sleep: a vata problem caused by anxiety and a racing mind.

Vatas are particularly sensitive to lack of sleep. They will be a mess including anxiety, not able to handle any sort of stress, insomnia, over-eating and extreme moods.



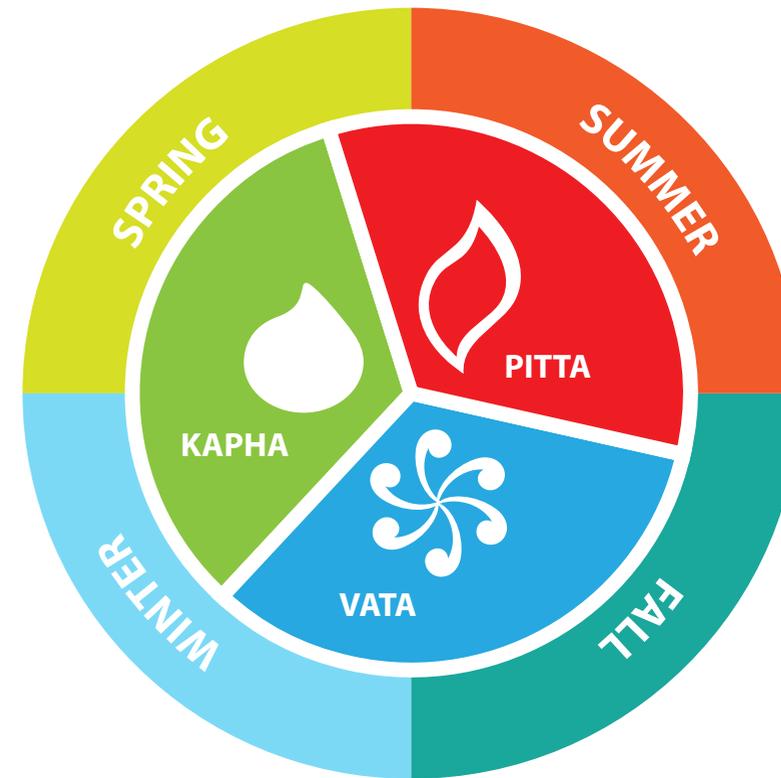
### LIFESTYLE TIPS FOR GETTING GOOD Z'S

- In bed by 10 p.m.
- Stick to the daily routine. Your day ends with sleep so if everything else is in line, your sleep will fall in line as well.
- Don't eat too much, too late. Not good for many reasons, but heart burn or indigestion is uncomfortable and can keep us awake.
- Practice daily pranayama (p. 165). Do so hum (p. 165) or nadi shodhanam (p. 167) daily! Start with 5 minutes. Great for calming the nerves (vata) and the mind (pitta).
- Do oil massage, a.k.a. abhyanga (pg. 200) daily.
- No caffeine after noon. Limiting caffeine in general is best, but if you have coffee, keep it to the morning hours only.
- Exercise regularly. A 30-minute daily walk is perfect for almost everyone.

### IN A PINCH IF YOU ARE TOSSING AND TURNING

- Drink a small amount of warm milk. Add a sprinkle of cardamom and nutmeg, or turmeric.
- Massage adhipati (*ah-DEE-pah-TEE*) marma (*MAR-muh*) which is an energy point on the top of our head — it's the soft spot on babies. The point is eight finger-widths away from the eyebrows, on top of the head. Place four fingers across the forehead, edge of the pinkie touching the eyebrows. Take your other hand and stack another four fingers on top of those. Remove your first hand and use your index finger to find the point at the edge of your hand and in the middle of the head. Massage clockwise with the middle finger 1–2 minutes.
- Massage your kirkatika (*Kur-KAH-teeka*) marma. Easier this time. It's the point where your neck meets your spine at the back of the head where there is an indentation. Massage clockwise with middle finger 1–2 minutes.
- Lay on your right side and do so hum.

# aaaand...goodnight.



### THE SEASONS

While doshas rule certain times of day, they also rule the seasons and we respond accordingly. We do not turn into different doshas just because the seasons change. Our doshic balance stays the same, but if our dosha matches the season, there's a strong likelihood you'll get imbalanced/overflowed with that dosha. We are already balancing ourselves during the seasons in so many ways. For example, when it's raining, we use an umbrella to keep dry. In sub-zero temperatures, we wear puffy coats and boots. We apply moisturizer as our skin gets a little more dry in fall and winter. Let's get a deeper understanding of how the doshas influence the seasons and ultimately our behavior.

The chart above shows where the doshas fall into play during the year. Notice there are only three doshas that overlap four seasons.

#### Vata season: fall through early winter

Fall through early winter is vata season. The outside air cools down and becomes "crisp" and less humid. Leaves dry up, fall off and get crunchy. Think about a dry crispy leaf flipping around in the breeze — a perfect example of vata energy. The sun shines for fewer hours during the day resulting in less

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### resource

Years back I made three free **Seasonal Bloom** booklets for each season. They are still on my site for free download.

Go to [heymonicab.com](http://heymonicab.com) and search "Seasonal Bloom."

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