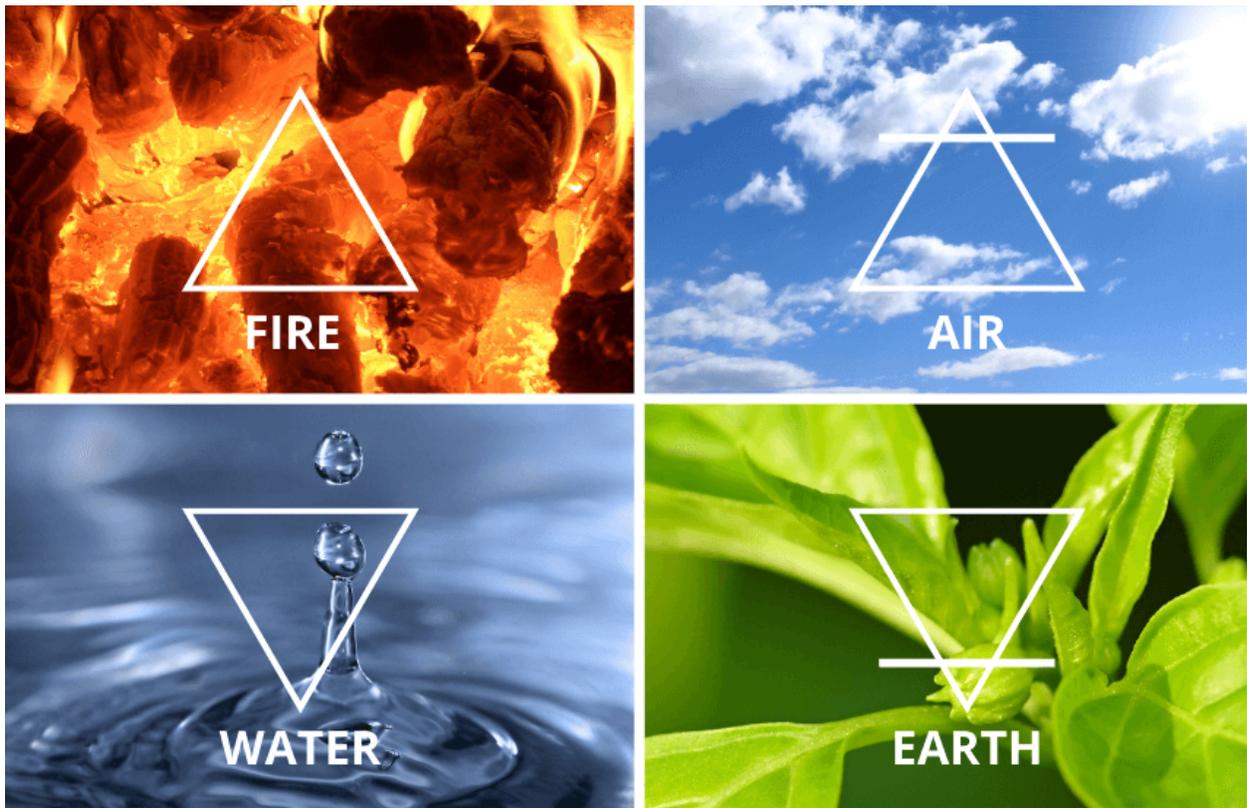


Four Elements: What Do They Symbolize?

(The following material is taken from a blog written by writer Nina Jay)

Let's explore the four elements, along with their symbolic significance, characteristics, attributes, and cultural associations. As you read about each element, think about which element resonates the most with you. To prepare to write your short story on this topic, jot down a few notes on your relationship with this particular element in the space provided below.

*Note: This is one interpretation of these elements and there are many more.



FIRE

Symbol of love, desire, anger, power, assertiveness, and energy

Fire is considered to be the first element to be created on earth. Fire is predominantly associated with the sun, and is a warm and dry element. It gives off light, which protects all living creatures from the shadows of night. Fire is transformative, and when merged with other elements, it can change and grow. For instance, when fire encounters air, it grows bigger, and burns brighter. Fire is associated with the season of summer, hot afternoons, and the cardinal direction south, and is typically depicted through the colors orange, red, and yellow. It's associated with the mythical creature, salamander.

Fire is a powerful, masculine element, and is symbolized by a triangle or a pyramid pointing upwards, towards the skies. The fire element is associated with planet Mars, and the corresponding zodiac signs are Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius. Fire governs the spirit and resides within the solar plexus chakra. While fire is certainly a warm element with many benefits, too much of it can be destructive.

WATER

Symbol of rebirth, healing, fertility, change, dreaming, clarity, intuition

Water is the most soothing and calming of the four elements. Its cool and wet nature allows it to appease the mind and body. The water element can be found in oceans, seas, lakes, rivers, and springs. Life on earth would not be possible without water, and every living creature from the smallest microorganism to the largest mammal depends on it. The flowing and transformative nature of water makes it a cleanser and purifier.

Water is associated with the season of autumn, sunset, and the cardinal direction west, and the colors used to depict water are blue, gray, silver and black. It's associated with the mythical *undine* (an elemental being) as well as with *mermaids*.

Water is a feminine element and is symbolized by an inverted triangle or a pyramid pointing downwards, towards the earth. The water element is associated with planet Venus, and the corresponding zodiac signs are Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces. Water governs the soul and resides within the sacral chakra. While water is undoubtedly a soothing element, too much of it can be melancholic and depressing.

AIR

Symbol of knowledge, perception, communication, creativity, and strategy

Air is the element of life itself as all living creatures, both plants and animals, require air to live and thrive. Air is warm, moist, and provides the mind and body with energy. The air element can be found all around us, but its most visible manifestation is through breezes or winds.

Air is associated with the season of spring, sunrise, and the cardinal direction east and is depicted through yellow, blue, white, and gray. It is associated with the mythical sylph or giant. Air is a powerful, masculine element, and is symbolized by a triangle or a pyramid pointing upwards, towards the skies, with a horizontal line near the top. The air element is associated with planet Jupiter, and the corresponding zodiac signs are Gemini, Libra, and Aquarius.

Air governs the mind and resides within the heart and throat chakra. While air is associated with breathing and life, too much of it can prove to be disastrous.

EARTH

Symbol of stability, nourishment, security, fertility, health, and home

Earth is the most materially grounded element. Its cool and dry nature provides a comfortable living space for all plants and animals. The earth element can be found in fields, hills, mountains, and plains and is home to all living beings. Survival would be impossible without earth. Earth is a rich and fertile element providing energy and sustenance to all living creatures. Earth is associated with the season of winter, midnight, and the cardinal direction North. Earth is depicted through green, brown and yellow. It's associated with the mythical gnome or dwarf.

Earth is a feminine element, the great mother that nourishes and protects. It's symbolized by an inverted triangle or a pyramid pointing downwards, towards earth. The earth element is associated with planet Saturn, and the corresponding zodiac signs Taurus, Virgo, and Capricorn.

Earth governs the body and resides within the root chakra. While Earth is an important element, its power and capabilities can only be realized in the presence of the others.

Today, the four elements are commonly etched into tattoos, jewelry, and other accessories. Those who feel like they are lacking a particular element often choose to wear it in the form of a pendant or tattoo it onto their skins. Some individuals also like to be connected to the four elements, by taking a dip in the ocean, gardening, lighting a fire, or meditating.

What element resonates most with you? In preparation to write a short story about your relationship with this particular element, jot down a few notes in the space below.

Notes: