



Dharma Types: Health, Relationships, and Spiritual Life

by Simon Chokoisky

IN THE LAST ISSUE we introduced the dharma types; in this issue you will learn how to use them as a practical tool to guide your relationships, health, and spiritual life. Sometimes people ask, “If there are seven billion people on the planet and only five *dharma* types, how does that make me unique?”

The answer is simple. Consider how knowing your gender helps you. Think about how confusing life could be if you didn’t know whether you were a man or a woman. These two simple categories — male and female — affect us almost every waking moment of life. Everything from the clothes we wear to the way we walk and talk, and even our names are determined by sex. Life would be very different if we didn’t know how to dress, fix our hair, or even which restroom to use.

Like knowing your gender or your *dosha*, understanding your dharma can turn the guesswork of day-to-day choices into easy and intelligent decisions, ranging from which foods are best to eat to which partners are most compatible with us. Even more importantly, it can help you find your purpose. Like a compass, your dharma type always points in the right direction; you simply have to learn to use it. And though it is not as readily visible as gender, I believe, as the ancient seers who discovered these archetypes, that your dharma type is fixed in you — just as sexual preference, eye color, and yes, your *prakruti*.

Warrior, Educator, Laborer, Merchant, Outsider- these are the five archetypes, and they have more to say about living your best life than just

what your profession should be, or what your personality is like. There is a diet, lifestyle, exercise, entertainment, and even sexual expression for every Dharma Type, and finding yours will help you flow with Nature in a way that makes life more enjoyable and your relationships fulfilling. Following are some examples.

DIET

Educators: Having *abimsā* (non violence) and the welfare of humanity as their aim, Educators typically require more *sattvic* diets with less meat and more fruits, nuts, and dairy. Educators have delicate constitutions and need easy-to-digest foods, often supplementing with herbs and vitamins to feel balanced. They may have what appear to others as finicky tastes, and require the most care and specialization in their diets.

Warriors: Warriors require more protein and fewer carbohydrates to feel at par. In medieval times in Europe, venison (meat) was typically reserved for the ruling class and their armies, with peasants kept on a high carbohydrate, low protein diet.¹ They are ideal candidates for Paleo-style diets, though they can do just as well as vegetarians so long as they keep their proteins and vegetables high and sugars and grains relatively low.

Laborers: Laborers typically do well on higher carbohydrate (grain) and medium to low protein diets. They can subsist just fine on vegetarian cuisine: rice, corn, beans, wheat, quinoa, lentils and vegetables. A little meat can be a treat for a

¹ The Robin Hood stories originate from this prohibition on hunting.

BODY	DHARMA TYPE	KOSHA	EXERCISE	FOOD	BRAIN TYPE	EMOTION
	Outsider	Bliss	Exotic	All	Basal Ganglia	Anxiety
	Educator	Wisdom	Inspirational	Veg/Organic	Temporal Lobe	Lust
	Merchant	Sensate	Dance	Rich, Tasty	Deep Limbic	Desire
	Warrior	Breath	Aerobic	Protein-rich	Frontal Lobe	Anger
	Laborer	Flesh	Mechanical	Carb-rich	Cingulate Gyrus	Dogma

non-vegetarian Laborer, and in ancient times was used sparingly. The modern overabundance of flesh foods has blighted our health because most dharma types (except perhaps the Warrior, and even then only for a short while) cannot handle (digest) meat for breakfast, lunch and dinner. This is one of the reasons for the epidemic in obesity and heart disease.

Merchant: Merchants appreciate luxury. Don't put them on a mono-diet too long unless you want them to rebel. Sumptuous chocolate, rich foods (including lots of *ghee*) and even fine wine are okay for easy-going Merchant types. Since their dharma is to bring laughter and joy to the world, they are allowed to enjoy their delicacies, with one catch: do it in moderation. Be like the Swiss, who sample delectably bite-sized pieces of chocolate, instead of binging on hefty one pound chunks of Hershey's. Moderation, however, can be tricky for the fun-loving and sometimes moody Merchant type.

Outsider: Outsiders like to go outside the box in search of new and cool trends. From Mongolian barbecue to strict vegan fare, they sample everything and usually settle on their own unique blend of foods. When imbalanced, however, they are most likely to turn to "dead" and packaged foods such as frozen dinners, canned food, chips, hot dogs and the like. Because Outsiders deal in extremes, they straddle both sides of the spectrum, from the most pure to the putrid. Like the Buddha, their path is to find a balance unique to their eclectic nature.

SPIRITUAL PATH

The spiritual paths appropriate to each type relate to their fundamental nature: The Laborer's ability to feel deeply and their desire to serve make Bhakti Yoga (the path of devotion) ideal for them.

The Warrior's sense of self-sacrifice and goal-setting makes them perfect for the path of Hatha Yoga and austerity.

Educators do well with scriptural-based wisdom teachings such as Jñāna Yoga. An aside to this is that Educators should also study the language of their sacred tradition, be it Hebrew, Sanskrit, or Latin. In the secular world this means that Educator scientists need to know mathematics and other 'languages' pertaining to their fields.

For Merchants, the best spiritual path is charity and good deeds. Compassion in action is their motto, or Karma Yoga.

Finally, the Outsiders way is the pathless path; they must find their own way by testing and experimentation. Outsider traditions include Aghora and some branches of Tantra, Taoism and other 'unconventional' approaches to the divine.

EXERCISE

Warriors are associated with the *prāna maya kosha*, the breath or vital body. Using their lungs and learning to move *prāna* is crucial if they are to remain healthy. This includes any aerobic exercise, *prānāyāma*, and martial arts training. A side note is that because our speech is carried by the vital breath, Warriors need to perfect the practice of *satya*, speaking words that are true and dharma-

MIND	DHARMA TYPE	PROFESSION	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS
	Laborer	Nourish, Build Community	Solid, Dependable	Stubborn, Dogmatic
	Warrior	Protect, Enforce Truth, Justice	Leader, Strong	Cynical, Materialistic
	Merchant	Happiness Brokers, Luxury	Fun, Motivated	Unreliable, Liar
	Educator	Wisdom, Education	Virtuous	Fickle, Weak
	Outsider	Innovation, Reform	Progressive	Blames Others



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promoting. A Warrior should never tell a lie except in the service of dharma.

For Laborers, who are primarily linked with the *anna maya kosha*, the food body, physical work and exercise are necessary. Because they also relate to the Earth element, heavy lifting and rough sports like rugby are suitable to their typically well-knit frames. They suffer the bumps and bruises of such sports better than, say Educators, who have more delicate constitutions. Laborers also flourish when given (though they rarely ask for them) physical therapies like massage, hot tubs, and saunas to keep their bodies relaxed and nimble.

Merchants like exercise least of any dharma type, unless it somehow adds to their bottom line. Fun activities that also provide some level of exercise are ideal, like dancing, hula hoops, playing games, and hiking. Merchants do better banking on sports rather than participating.

For Educators, tennis, horseback riding, hiking, non-competitive sports, and cerebral activities are the best form of exercise. Walking can be highly inspiring to Educators who may be too focused in their heads to appreciate their bodies. They should also respect the Ayurvedic guidelines for exercise: when light sweat forms on the forehead, nape, underarms and crotch, that is the sign to stop.

For Outsiders, exercise may be unconventional, cutting edge, or rooted in foreign philosophy,

like yoga, t'ai chi, or kettlebell lifting. Outsiders often *play* one of the other Dharma Types, and therefore adopt its personality traits. Thus, an Outsider *playing* a Warrior will be attracted to sports and martial arts in general, whereas one playing a Merchant may be less inclined. This is a just taste of the rich buffet presented by your dharma type. 🌀

About the Author

Simon teaches Ayurvedic Studies Program, Levels 1 and 2 Sanskrit as well as ASP 2 Medical Jyotish. He was born to Bulgarian immigrant parents in Phoenix, AZ, where he attended Arizona State University. Dissatisfied with a French major, he turned to Ayurveda in 1998 and, with Jyotisha, began his study in the Vedic sciences.

Simon has studied Vastu Shastra, Sanskrit, Jyotisha, and Ayurveda, and worked professionally as a fitness consultant and Ayurvedic massage therapist. He has traveled extensively, and speaks four languages, in addition to studying and teaching Sanskrit.

The author of The Five Dharma Types, you can visit Simon at his website, spirittype.com, to find out more about dharma types.

SOUL	DHARMA TYPE	SPIRITUAL PATH	YAMA	NIYAMA	ELEMENT
	Laborer	Devotion/Service	Continence	Cleanliness	Earth
	Warrior	Karma Yoga, Austerity	Truth, Prana Control	Austerity	Fire
	Merchant	Ritual, Charity, Karma Yoga	Non-Stealing	Contentment	Water
	Educator	Wisdom, Scripture	Non-Violence	Self-Study	Air
	Outsider	Tantra, Tabu, Mystery	Non-Grasping	Surrender to Divine	Space

* Each dharma type has a yogic Yama and Niyama associated with it. Focusing on the yamas and niyama specific to your dharma type will help you better grasp them all.