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Episode 6 Feature on FEMININE WISDOM

Guest Speaker Betty-Ann Heggie

Betty: ... between the way that men would do things and the way that- I don't necessarily just mean men, there are women that would do in what we would consider to be a masculine trait way of a [game?]. I do think that we are- in Canada and I do think that all of us live with one energy or the other, whether masculine or feminine. I also believe that we are better when we're using both because when we only use one, we get out of balance and we [?] to the extreme and then the virtue of that energy, of that attribute becomes a vice.

I'm a big believer of you're going to live with one energy or the other. It doesn't necessarily mean that you live with the same energy as your gender but there is going to be a strong pull in that direction because we've all been socialized. Your question to me when we're speaking or when you sent to the email was, I'm thinking about Trudeau who appointed half of his cabinet as women and [inaudible] was 2015, what is it about Canada.

It was interesting because I thought in the airplane the next morning and started reading the newspaper and there was an article about how we are- police force in Canada, our national police force is the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. We're quite famous all over the world for the man in the red uniforms that are on horses that have these high ideals and they have just allowed hijabs as part of their uniforms so that they can attract Muslim women to the force.

I read that and I thought, what a difference compared to France where the burka is banned and they are having all these skirmishes on the

beaches to prohibit body covering bikinis. Here we have a country that values diversity compared to one where men are still telling women what to wear.

Gina: That is a little archetypal story, is in microcosm of the bigger picture. It's fascinating, isn't it, that you should spot that because it's such a conversation of the moment, isn't it. Such a difference in the reaction.

Betty: Yes, completely. I think that Canada is a country that leads with a feminine energy value system. As opposed to, I would say both Britain and the United States would lead with a masculine energy value system. When you look at the attributes of feminine energy value systems, they tend to be a lot more about the collective and a lot less about the individual. They are very much about, what can we do together as opposed to, I want to stand out. That means they're usually a lot organizations and a lot [?]. As a result, you'll see women who tend to have more feminine energy, my experience with doing workshops, I would say about 70% of women would lead with their feminine energy and I do believe that, that socialization, I don't believe that there's a difference between the sexes.

When you have a country that leads with its feminine energy, women tend to try to level the [plain?] scale to get rid of the hierarchy and make everybody even, and one of the ways that they do that is by giving compliments and apologizing. Because that makes everybody even. Whereas in the masculine hierarchy, if you apologize, you lower yourself and if somebody apologizes to you, you raise yourself. Canada as a country, it's a joke but they are for apologizing people.

Gina: Did you apologize-

Betty: If you see comedians, they make jokes about Canada they're like, somebody opened the door, I'm sorry did I open it wide enough.

Gina: It's lovely. Did Canada do an apology to the indigenous people like Australia did? I can't remember.

Betty: This was interesting. They are currently in a- they currently have a residential [?] they took all the [?] children away from their parents and put them into residential schools and those schools unfortunately were run by Catholics and a lot of those priests abused the children and now they are having- they're going around the country having tribunals where they are making restitution with all of the residential children and giving them all cash compensations. They are all grown now but what they are finding, I think is that they are telling their stories to an arbitrator and the fact that there are no longer concealing their shame and they are being recognized and I think they're finding that there's a great deal of emancipation with that.

I think it's just part- it's an interesting thing but you kind of say, what creates this and I will tell you in my job, I travel between Canada and the

United States all the time. I was back and forth all the time. I came to believe that while the border runs east and west, the geographic regions run north and south, and those geographic regions determine what people do for living. That then because people spend so much of their day doing that spills over into their value system in the way that they do things.

For example, the people in Saskatchewan, where I come from which is based on an agricultural economy are more like the people in [central?] United States that are farmers than they are like people on the east or the west coast. Because when you're a farmer, you have to get the crop in, you've got limited time and your machinery might break down and so therefore, somebody else finished, they worked cooperatively. They come over and helped them get the crop off. That's a very feminine energy, it's all about the [?] we help each other.

In the same way you think of Canada and the United States, the west coast where people treasure their time off because they live in an environment where they love to get outside enjoy themselves. There are people that really work to live which is feminine energy as opposed to live to work, which is masculine energy. The people of the West Coast to Canada in Vancouver are very much like the West Coast of the United States in California. Contrary but the money [spenders?] returned to New York and Toronto and, of course, then it's all work to live because I want to make as much money as I can and it's all about me in establishing- and bringing in money, it's all about the bottom line.

What I think is that Canada by and large is a country that depends on exports, so it has to be other oriented and it has to know what's happening around the world so that it knows whether people are going to be buying its grain and taking its commodities. When you're always looking what other people are doing, that's very much about the feminine. You're very concerned about others. We also have very severe weather conditions in this country. In the winter we have radio announcements saying when you get up in the morning, if your skin is exposed more than 30 seconds, it will freeze. Nobody here feels like they are bigger than God, they all know that there is a larger force that they can't control in the weather.

Gina: You can't get away from nature in Canada, can you? It's so huge in Canada and [crosstalk]

Betty: Exactly.

Gina: Talking about working to live, what a life. Isn't Vancouver one of the top five if not one of the top two places to live. It's so aspiration because it's so beautiful and close to nature and people have that as part of their everyday life, don't they?

Betty: Yes. When people appreciate that, that's very much about the feminine. They don't [care?] they can control nature or that they are- they feel like there's something larger than themselves. There's a bigger plan

[inaudible] and they are part of it. I think that that was like the Canadian value system and that's one of the reasons why, and so many countries right now are upset about refugees. You got people lined up in Canada wanting to take them.

Gina: Really?

Betty: It's phenomenal. Everybody I know is trying to bring in a Syrian family.

Gina: How amazing. Yes, I think that's part of the value system. You do have more space there. I don't know there's a country you are looking to bring more people in. I don't know population wise whether you need more people. In Britain, we're very stuck for space, that's not the number one reason, I don't know whether it's the number one reason that we have this limit for refugees. We're very limited with the resources. Germany is a much bigger country and also they need more of a population and so that's part of I suppose why Angela Merkel reaches out. It's interesting people are actually opening their hearts and saying come, making in those individual expressions saying yes, we'll take in a refugee.

Betty: It's even more than that Gina, it's that when they come, we want them to retain what makes them special because instead of wanting everyone to assimilate, we're very much about appreciating diversity. Right now, they are celebrating Ukrainian day in the Saskatchewan because of the large Ukrainian population. I was at a function yesterday where all the school kids came out that were from Ukrainian heritage, wearing the Ukrainian costumes and doing dances. It's very much about people wanting- we think there's value when people being different.

Gina: I see that each time I come to Canada, it's wonderful the way so many cultures are embraced. I can feel it [crosstalk] I can feel it when I'm there. Also, I can feel the Commonwealth connection. It's a very different North American country because of the connection with Britain and being part of the Commonwealth, I suppose that is a factor too but there's something has made the Canadian. I was impressed that your new prime minister came in and rather than just saying, we need more women actually made a cabinet 50-50.

Betty: Yes, everybody talked about but he actually did something about it. Here is the interesting thing, if you go back to my basic premise which is while we lead with the [seven?] value system that might be more feminine, we don't want that to become too extreme where we become so other oriented we don't take care of ourselves and what belongs to us. Where we become so overly conscious that we now take advantage of opportunities. We need to have both in order not to allow those good characteristics to become too extreme and then have them turn into a vice because just like my mother used to say, too much of a good thing is a bad thing.

Gina: Absolutely, yes. The pendulum has swung one way and we don't want it to swing all the way back, there's a movement moving backwards, we want it

to get to that place as you say where we, I think we're consciously aware of the two energies, we can dance with the two and go what's appropriate now and then be unconsciously competent in our masculine and feminine dynamic.

Betty: Yes, absolutely. Because what I say when I do workshops is that you're going to live with one energy but you want the other energy there so that it's accessible to you because wise leaders are known for being able to choose the exact right option action and option for every situation venue and audience. If you only are using half of the action and attributes available to you, you're only flying on one wing.

Gina: That's fantastic, that's just a great place for us to end, thank you so much Betty, thank you.