

# A Woman of Wisdom:

## Devaa Haley Mitchell

By Kris Steinnes

Devaa Haley Mitchell exemplifies someone who is striving to bring the feminine principles into her life fully. Through her inner spiritual work, and out into the outer world, she explores incorporating the feminine model into her business life, where she can contribute to the balance of the feminine and masculine energies.


Devaa's upbringing probably wasn't very different than what many of us experienced growing up in America. Devaa felt she was raised by two male energies. Her father was a very achievement oriented businessman and even though her mother was feminine looking, she admitted she had a strong, yang energy running multiple businesses, and was also achievement oriented. So she grew up with a strong emphasis on getting good grades, excelling in sports, and achieving in the outer world, especially emulating the masculine model of leadership.



Attending Stanford University with a Fulbright grant, she followed that paradigm of being valued and loved for what you achieved in the world. Although she had achieved a lot of things she wanted to achieve in her life with a prestigious job, at a certain point in her 20's she realized it wasn't equating to who she was, even though it still was hidden inside her. Feeling insecure in that environment, she wore pantsuits, her hair back, and glasses so that people wouldn't notice she was a woman.

Working as hard as she could work, she was miserable as she struggled inside trying to discover a deep sense of why she's here, what is she achieving, what does success mean. She was told she wasn't meeting the company's expectations, which was based on numbers and how well she worked on excel documents. She lost sight of her joy and life came crashing down on her. It was a long journey looking at who she was, what would bring her meaning and joy, and how she could create her life to be in alignment with who she wanted to be.

To overcome her sense of disillusionment she plopped herself into a very different environment at Esalen, living in a spiritual community as a work scholar for a month. In this positive environment she started meditating and her prayers were answered when she received a call from an acquaintance who wanted to start a venture in philanthropy




funding for entrepreneurs. It was a beautiful experience being the first Executive Director of that non-profit organization.

Over time she realized even though it was important work it still was about changing the world on the outside. She came to know she couldn't make change in the outer world without the inner work to change who she was in the world.


This self reflection continued to take her on the journey and through meditation, and another prayer, spirit led her to the Institute of Noetic Science. Here she felt more at home but even the science was too off field for her, and she realized the core for her was spirituality – that is where her home is.

## FEMININE ARCHETYPES

Devaa had a deep sense that she was meant to run a mystery school, but she didn't know what that meant. Exploring this she landed in a 13-month mystery school led by Ariel Spilbury, where she felt she had come home. Working with the 13 different aspects or archetypes of the feminine, she discovered which one's she was strong in and which one's she needed to incorporate more into her life for the wholeness she desired.



Devaa sees there's a whole palette of colors, not just the three to five most of us paint our lives with. So she explored how to



mine the gems of those places within, and get access to all aspects of the feminine. Devaa felt so alive in the transformation with the women around her that she's made her life journey to bring these concepts into the world.

Learning how to embody the feminine is a continual process of getting stronger and more comfortable in the thirteen different energies of the feminine. We are very familiar with the yin aspects – open heartedness, gentleness, nurturing, all aspects of the great mother but Devaa teaches the full range of the feminine which include other aspects such as compassion, the mystic, the creator/destroyer, the muse, the primal goddess/wild women, and the initiator.

The mystic in the feminine opens your intuitive capacities to be able to read the symbolic nature of the universe. Kali represents the creator/destroyer, with her fierce nature that liberates the patterns that hold us back. The muse connects us to our innocence and the wellspring of creativity that's within the feminine. The primal goddess is the wild woman who plays by her own rules, and celebrates sexuality within the feminine. When embracing the initiator aspects we're standing in our truth and power and integrity. It's about being willing to not be liked when it's appropriate to speak our truth.

These are just a few of the 13 aspects of the feminine that we can embrace so we have access to all these different parts of ourselves, to be whole and sovereign. The final aspect is the alchemical process to bring all of this together within our own nature.

An important archetype for Devaa is the Greek goddess Artemis, who is a strong manifestor. Instead of the linear masculine model we are used to Devaa has learned to manifest from a very feminine perspective. What she desires to manifest in her life is magnetized towards her, as opposed to shooting the arrow towards her desired target. It's about allowing life to be fluid and unfold in a natural rhythm so you can see what the universe is presenting to you. It's important to pay attention to what's coming forward. It might not look like the way you imagined it so it's necessary to be accept what is showing up in your life. There's a lot more breathing room and joy as you don't have to drive yourself so hard for results and the journey towards your dreams is also rewarding.

Currently Devaa in her work at The Shift Network she strives to unify the masculine and feminine in the business. The masculine aspects provide a strong structure, everything you think of as roles and responsibilities, timelines, deadlines, internal structure, how the finances work, the

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business plan, which are important for a business to function. Most businesses start there and end there too. To look at the feminine in business, she works at how to create the culture inside the organization, which includes the ways you interact with each other.

In her company they make use of simple processes such as starting the meeting singing or chanting together, to open their hearts, and meditate together. The majority of staff meeting time is not spent on strategy, but on cultivating their human connections. So space is created where they get to know each other and people share what's in their heart. For Devaa the heart based connection is like the oil that keeps the machine running well.

Decisions are made from meditation journeys where they tap into the intuitive expansive mind, which does always not make business sense, but it has created successes for the company. It's about allowing the intuitive to influence the decisions. The usual business targets and responsibilities are still in place but it's a collaborative process.

When things get sticky, as they naturally do, Devaa inquires how to come back to heart based practices. Creating a culture

where people want to work, there's a loyalty that's created and they find people aren't sick as often, and there's not the animosity that's common in other businesses. Toxic environments in the workplace affect morale, productivity and more importantly people become casualties.

Devaa suggests you think about how to allow humanity to show up at the office so you're not just

about you as a person. It goes a long way to have some non-business time, so a caring community is cultivated that is invested in each other's well being.

Systems can be developed where everyone can be involved in the co-creation of the business, which is a feminine principle, and where people can feel heard and honored. People are afraid around those who are

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a cog in a wheel. She encourages everyone to share a human weather report, just a few sentences to share what's going on in your life so there's a chance for people to know something

higher in position than them, but Devaa encourages you to be willing to stick your neck out sometimes to make suggestions on how things might be done differently. That's bringing in the

archetype of an initiator. Instead of waiting for an invitation, if you feel strongly about something, she suggests to think about who might be receptive and write them a letter, take them to lunch.

Leadership comes when you see an opportunity to make improvements and you can demonstrate how it could work – take the step even though there can be failure. Don't wait – see how you can be an entrepreneur wherever you are. And if it still doesn't work for you, perhaps you're in a dead end, and this is not your place to be in the long term.

## FEMININE LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

Devaa feels strongly that the traits of inspired feminine leadership include a soulful presence – the beingness of who you are. People feel the power of your presence, so it's important to cultivate that through your inner work, through your spiritual practice. Cultivate that so it's radiant, and attracts people.

Open heartedness: keep your heart open to the people working with you, feel their humanity.

Be willing to stand in your power. Part of that is speaking your deepest truths when the moment is right, not sacrificing that truth even when it's not going to be received by approval.

Speak up with wise speech – if you're in judgment, reaction, or you are triggered by something, that's not going to be received as wise speech. Or if you have an agenda, trying to manipulate things your way, that's not being wise.

It's important to know when you're clear about issues so when you speak up it's clean, without emotional attachment. You need to know the appropriate time to deliver that truth, and when it's appropriate to bite your tongue. Know when you can use your words to liberate, and when the field is ripe for it, as opposed to speaking to closed ears. It requires some maturity as you are wielding a sword. You can literally cut off someone's arms, heads, and women are labeled as bitchy when they do this – but you can use that same sword to cut off patterns that aren't serving you anymore. It requires practice and cultivation to get skilled with your sword. Either we don't do it, or we are sloppy and create a mess when we speak up and then we have to clean it up. Devaa suggests finding a place to practice that with other women.

Many women focus on leadership on the external things – what's on their resume, the job positions they've had and their skill sets. The under developed skill is the power of the presence. Women leaders aren't

spending enough time on this and Devaa feels that's really their foundation. They might be saying the right things, wear the appropriate clothes, and have a great power point presentation, but it's their presence that carries the impact they will have in the world.

A big learning for Devaa personally was the willingness to be more transparent.

Something happened recently while taking a class in leadership. She was being videotaped practicing a speech about being a failure, and what she'd learned from that experience. She told a story of a humiliating, shameful experience of being fired. She was in a room that was very visible and was told she wasn't meeting the company's expectations. She remembered being red in the face, knowing her colleagues could see her, and she wanted to disappear and be invisible. She ended up leaving that job, and what she learned was that extremely successful entrepreneurs most commonly had many failures and their willingness to go through their failures led to their success.

This practice video was uploaded to a youtube account, which she thought was private. It got tweeted and she was totally horrified as it was one of her dark shadow stories that she didn't

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want anyone to know about. What shocked her was she got more people responding to that video than anything else. It was her willingness to be raw, vulnerable and pull back the curtain on herself that touched a human cord in people. People wanted to know this human aspect more than the polished figure she felt she needed to share.

Devaa sees a new trend to not dump your life story out there, especially pieces you haven't metabolized yet. People feel they need to be someone different than who they are and Devaa also felt that need to show only what she thought people thought was more palatable. Having the willingness to take off the mask, to show your struggles, to let that be in the public discourse is an important aspect of being a leader because people will relate to you as a human being with similar experiences to their own.

Even though we feel wobbly at times, when we come as we are in that moment, that's enough and it's being truthful – not hiding and feeling shamed into the need to be invisible. And

we learn from each other as we share our failures along with our successes.

Devaa sees a momentum of women gathering and there's a craving for deep authentic mean-

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ingful connections with other women. She's heard from women that they have not always experienced other women supporting them. There's the archetype of the queen – off with your head – where women compete with each other as to who's the most attractive, and trying to take each other down. Fearing other women will hate us we don't show our full, beautiful, and powerful selves. We want friends, so we'd better keep it under wraps. There's space for all of us to win and shine. When

you are being successful it is not a detriment to others. There's enough to go around, enough space to have all voices heard

Devaa is witnessing women coming together in circles, creating a new sisterhood, where other women support them and they can see each other in their full potential. There's a deep level of comradery and support - beautiful people stepping into new forms of leadership and being supported.

Watching people transform as they step into these archetypes of the feminine excites Devaa – the blossoming that happens inside of people.

We need women who are as awake and conscious as possible, to support people to live fully in their own unique radiance. ✨

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