

The background of the entire image is a dark, textured, brownish-grey surface. In the center, a woman with dark, curly hair and a black lace mask is depicted. She is wearing a vibrant red, flowing robe that is open at the shoulders. She holds a long, silver sword horizontally across her chest with both hands. From each end of the sword, a chain hangs down to a small, white, bowl-shaped scale of justice. The scales are positioned on either side of the woman, one slightly higher than the other. The overall mood is solemn and judicial.

Threads of the emergent field of the Sacred Feminine and the Law

With enquiries for ongoing
contemplation

Elaine R.  Quinn

I imagine a world where law will have been reclaimed by the feminine.

Where law will be practised and promulgated by authentic, heart-centred feminine leaders.

I have no idea how that reality will come about.

I remember a time when I thought I could arrive at a well-formulated "plan" or dissertation about what that may look like, or "the steps" that might be taken. I felt the vision, I felt the rebirth of Lady Justice. Give me steps! I want to know how! What should I "do"!

The realisation that this is impossible, can never be, is perhaps itself ironically one of the important guide posts en route.

Because, like with the mindfulness movements, spiritual movements and other movements, there will probably be a co-opting of the feminine as the next new movement in law. Becoming an alluring and interesting label more than a roots and bones-deep transformation.

And I say this to myself as much as to anyone else because I am as susceptible to this as anyone. We yearn for it, we feel it and we want to do it our way. Our faculty for deep listening has been injured. Our roots have been severed. Our hearts (especially in law) have closed.

On a personal level, real transformation is hard and takes time. On a collective level, for our legal systems, who knows how long this will take.

The seeds however can be (woven and) sown. And when those seeds are full of heart and truth and honest yearning, we can trust they will grow steadily and blossom fully in time.

The seeds and whispers here are from writing over the past 3 years.

**Cover page art by Jamie Rice*

Meet the Writer



I am a woman, mother and former practising lawyer living and working in the Netherlands but born and raised in Ireland.

For years, I have been interested in the path of merging spirituality and law and the philosophical underpinnings of what that means.

More recently, I write, question and enquire about how the law can be transformed through the lens of feminine spirituality.

This is a collection of writing from 2022 - 2024

www.elainerquinn.com

Substack: @elainerquinn

Instagram: @elainerquinn

Facebook: @elainerquinn79

INDEX

Chapter 1 - Justice-Keepers before lawyers

Chapter 2 - The existing system (often) cannot house us

Chapter 3 - Responding to legal issues from grounded, feminine presence first

Chapter 4 - Finding the seed principle, the sacred feminine quality, in the law you are working with

Chapter 5 - Valuing, revering, prioritising the qualities of life most important to you when you practice law (even if it breaks rules and convention)

Chapter 6 - Practicing and engaging with law in a way that feels good and natural (even if it breaks rules and convention)

Chapter 7 - Legal language can be precise, clear, transparent - and loving

Chapter 8 - Feeling our heart and feeling our grief while practicing law

Chapter 9 - Keep noticing the fear and constriction. A legal system permeated by love is not a fantasy

Enquiries for Contemplation (*page 22*)

Chapter One

Justice-Keepers before Qualified Lawyers



It is important to remember that, in the deepest sense, we were lawyers before we entered the legal system.

And I say this because most of us that did end up working in law have a strong resonance with justice, with fairness, with balance. We had this desire, this deep feeling, that we wanted to advocate for some person, or community, or the earth, or a place. We wanted to stand up for the vulnerable, the less well-off. We went into law with those sincere desires and that is, in fact, what makes us lawyers and practitioners of justice in the deepest sense.

Therefore, if we choose to step out of the system, we are still lawyers, we are still justice-keepers. This vocation still wants us and needs us.

Though it is easy to say, this is really important to remember and to feel deep in our bodies because the roots of law and justice are far deeper than what is reflected and maintained in our modern legal systems.

The deeper original source has existed since time-immemorial. The Earth herself is a field of justice, constantly balancing, constantly birthing and dying, constantly creating and destroying, constantly keeping things in perfect harmony.

And because our bodies are of the earth, we also have this resonance with deep, true, organic justice, balance, fairness. And some of us particularly resonate with these sacred qualities.

Without this connection to the original source, law becomes an intellectual exercise. It becomes overly-complex, disconnected, disassociated, meaningless. This is where we are at, we have lost that deeper connection. This is what we need to restore.

And, although it might sound like a good idea, like the right idea, this is not necessarily easy to do. In practice, it does require us to really visit and acknowledge and feel this powerlessness, this personal sense of powerlessness. And also our collective powerlessness and how we are collectively plugged into these systems and rely on them for our stability and security and well-being.

Becoming sovereign and really feeling our deeper power and our roots is not necessarily an easy or quick-fix path. We can feel like we are reclaiming our power and then we can see how actually the roots are very deep in the ways that we are still plugged in. Because, although it might be easy to say that Earth is the ultimate field of justice, mother of justice, natural balancer, natural creator of harmony - in fact, we have lost that connection and this is part of the restoration that we desire to recreate. This is part of the story of the powerlessness. This deep connection that we had, this deep holding from the ultimate field of law and justice was broken.

We had to become dependent on a false system in a way. What I have been feeling and tuning into is that the Earth herself wants us to do this now. If we listen, she is speaking to us and, in fact, is holding us. We can trust and rely on her. She is guiding us and will support us as we forge the way forward. And reclaim our power and reclaim the original source of our justice. And feel this deep in our bodies.

You know, just to say finally, I heard this story once from a senior partner I worked with that, when he was a younger clerk in the courts, he worked for one of the senior judges and this judge used to hear a case and then he would say to his clerk: “This is my decision, now find me the law to support it.”

This reflects very well, I think, where we need to go. Our bodies know, our bodies know justice, we need to trust this again. We already intuitively know what's right - particularly when we have restored that deep connection to our knowing and to the earth.

Link to the full article here: <https://elainerquinn.substack.com/p/justice-keepers>

Chapter Two

The existing system (mostly) cannot house us



Through fortune or chance, I found myself in 2008 practicing law in a big corporate law firm in Sydney taking the ferry across the harbour to work in my flip flops and meditating every spare half hour I could (including on my marine commute and lunch breaks). Weekends were spent either practising yoga, singing kirtan or on buddhist meditation intensives.

My body consciousness began asking deeper questions about the link between practising law and practising meditation - it had radically shifted my own perception of what was possible. Apart from beginning to know the ease and flow that could take place within a legal career, I was also sensing - from this visceral day-to-day experience - the immense possibilities for something greater. Huge creativity, reform and revolution, true justice for clients, and a myriad other as-yet-unarticulated potentials.

At some point in this journey my awakening consciousness hit the boundary of the rigidity of the mind-made legal system. I reached a point where who I was becoming and how I was changing could not be housed in the existing structure.

Being in a relaxed and mindful state of being makes for a productive employee but when the structures are focused on capitalising on the productivity (and not deeply understanding and nourishing what causes it) something will give.

As I have continued to move through significant life events since then - first, spiralling downwards into the shadow realms through a challenging relationship (a place where mindfulness no longer offered enough), then the life-changing repercussions that followed the birth of my son when the rigorous initiation of motherhood took hold - the realm of the feminine mysteries has started to work its magic on my legal brain. Only writers on the feminine mysteries at this point seem to address what my body is feeling, sensing, knowing and trying to articulate.

I will end with this. What I have discovered is:

Our bodies want to say something about Law.

We should let them speak.

They know the field, or remember the field from times past. Old times, Ancient times.

Law (and structure) is actually a deep knowing in the feminine body. A knowing about Order, Justice, Innocence and Integrity.

None of these sacred words mean what our minds interpret them to mean in our modern legal systems. They are not words of division and judgment. They are sacred words of wholeness and goodness. They describe a deep untouched place in all of us that yearns to be met and held and forgiven and seen.

Link to the full article here: <https://elainerquinn.substack.com/p/listening-to-how-the-body-experiences>

Chapter Three

Responding to legal issues from grounded, feminine presence first



I wanted to share an intriguing exchange I witnessed a few months back that got my mind whirring about what deep feminine guidance to a complicated legal issue might feel like, and the ways this type of guidance could be incorporated into my own and other's work.

The issue involved a complex and stressful dispute around a very valuable piece of land with multiple parties interests involved. When I listened to this masterful teacher in feminine energetics respond to the woman's obvious stress, I was struck by the fact that this could be an approach to use while working with people dealing with conflict situations/involved in litigation.

The overview of her response - which was grounded by a powerful energetic holding - included the following invitation:

- to take a step back from the whole drama;
- to notice the theatre being played out, the different actors on the stage;
- to notice whether they are reflecting back any dynamics that are familiar/that have played out before;
- to notice that there is a lot of energy in the situation that is perhaps asking for something to happen (a type of initiation);
- to ask what is truly desired here (by you / by the land).

In deep contrast, my (almost instantaneous and heavily trained) response when listening was: body contracts, belly contracts, mind starts racing, seeking possible solutions, weighing options, taking in minor details from the facts of the story being shared, slicing and analysing the key facts from the story, an overall feeling of pressure to find a neat and efficient solution for this person to ease their obvious distress.

It was the stark contrast of observing my inner response and this masterful, grounded deep feminine body response that highlighted the potential for where we can go. The law has such an influential role in perpetuating conflict and fear, and actually if we were trained to instead meet people from that deeper, somatic place and guide them towards their own inner powers of perception and knowing to create breakthrough moments and deeper transformation.

It's like a 360-degree transformation in what a lawyer is and does - and it feels hugely exciting.

Link to the full article here: <https://elainerquinn.substack.com/p/law-being-in-the-world-and-more>

Chapter Four

Finding the seed principle, the sacred feminine quality, in the law you are working with

Contracts Law - TRUST

Criminal Law - FORGIVENESS,
ACCOUNTABILITY

Reputation Law - HONOUR, TRUTH

How can we stay in contact with aspirational qualities like justice, fairness, truth, wisdom, peace when we are working with the law? Embody them? Prioritise them?

Our laws originate from a person or a group that embodies these aspirational qualities, and that holds a vision for a better, fairer way of doing things. (Of course, there are many unjust and unfair laws that don't originate this way.)

Sophisticated legislation then forms around the initial idea and, as time goes on, increasingly complex rules and regulations, caselaw, guidance and so on. People working with the law then get lost and bogged down in this complexity. We feel constrained and limited by it, not too mention overwhelmed.

We gradually almost completely lose contact with the original essence, the original intent and the aspirational qualities that inspired the law in the first place (you could say both the specific law we may be working with, but also Law itself as a universal idea). These original qualities that seeded our laws, though intangible and difficult to measure, are surely as important (if not more so) as the complex web of words that have been created around them.

You could say that we have created a huge imbalance — both in practice and in education — prioritising and emphasising the letter of the law over its true spirit. This could also be described as emphasising a left brain/logical/masculine approach over a right brain/intuitive/feminine approach instead of addressing and integrating both.

A story that illustrates this well, and that stuck with me, was from a law partner I used to work for. He had clerked as a young graduate with an experienced judge that had made a great impression on him.

This Judge used to hear a case and then say to his Clerk, “This is my decision for the case. Now find me the law that supports that answer”.

In other words, this law partner told me, the Judge would approach it seemingly backwards. He would access and prioritise his inner sense of what was fair — his own wisdom, intuition and common sense — to make the decision, and only then have his Clerk find the relevant laws that would back up that decision.

If we are working with the law, as a simple practice, we can start to pay attention to when our minds have become overly entangled in the complexity of legal rules and words. We will know this because our head or chest may feel tight, we may feel anxious and even overwhelmed with the weight of the words and our own stressful thoughts.

Even just pausing and noticing here can be a relief. Taking a breath.

We can remind ourselves that the law is about so much more than just interpretation of text and rules and intellectual knowing. It is over-archingly about what is right, fair and true in any particular situation, and we can only access this in any given moment through our own intuitive and whole-body knowing. Both types of knowing are important but one is repeatedly overlooked and undervalued.

We can give ourselves permission to become unstuck — if even for a moment — from the letter of the law and to return to its original spirit. This can bring some relief not only our own stressed out minds but also bring some much needed balance back to our overly complex legal systems.

Link to the full article here: <https://elainerquinn.substack.com/p/embodying-the-spirit-of-law>

Chapter Five

Valuing, revering, prioritising the qualities of life that are important to you when you practice law (even if it breaks rules and convention)



Mothering — caring for children, family members, friends, neighbours, pets by anybody — brings us into contact with the chaos of the world.

It can feel very uncomfortable.

Like that chaos that we had kept carefully and competently under wraps increasingly comes loose and escapes into the outer world for all to see.

She can show herself in the form of cancelled appointments, messy hair, tears for no reason, expired tax discs, overgrown grass, unmade beds — to list just a few of the thousands of ways chaos displays her face in our manicured world.

But she is alive and despite our attempts to prove otherwise she is the real world. When we are caught in the whirling nature of chaos we can long to return to orderly, sanitised straight lines. To the measurable and the predictable. I am thinking here particularly of women that are mothering — in whatever way that is happening — and also involved in some way in the professional world of the (digital) office and briefcase.

I knew a woman once who left her role because she did not receive the promotion she expected and deserved (she was more experienced than younger men in the office that had been promoted far earlier). She was a mother to many, that was clear — children, family members and even colleagues. She had an expansive and grounded feminine presence and a great sense of humour. When she was in the office you knew it and you felt better for it. She had time for everyone. She was also sometimes in late, and she was behind in her billing targets.

Promotion decisions were made primarily on predictable variables like billable hours and money earned for the firm. Was her expansive presence and warm heart (cultivated over years of mothering left, right and centre!) measurable? Was her compassion for colleagues measurable? Was the spirit of messy hair and a bit of wild chaos and laughter in the office measurable? No. Were these qualities valuable? Without a doubt. Let me add that I am not saying that this woman did not also have the intellectual prowess of male colleagues. She had it all, she may just not have hit the same monetary targets.

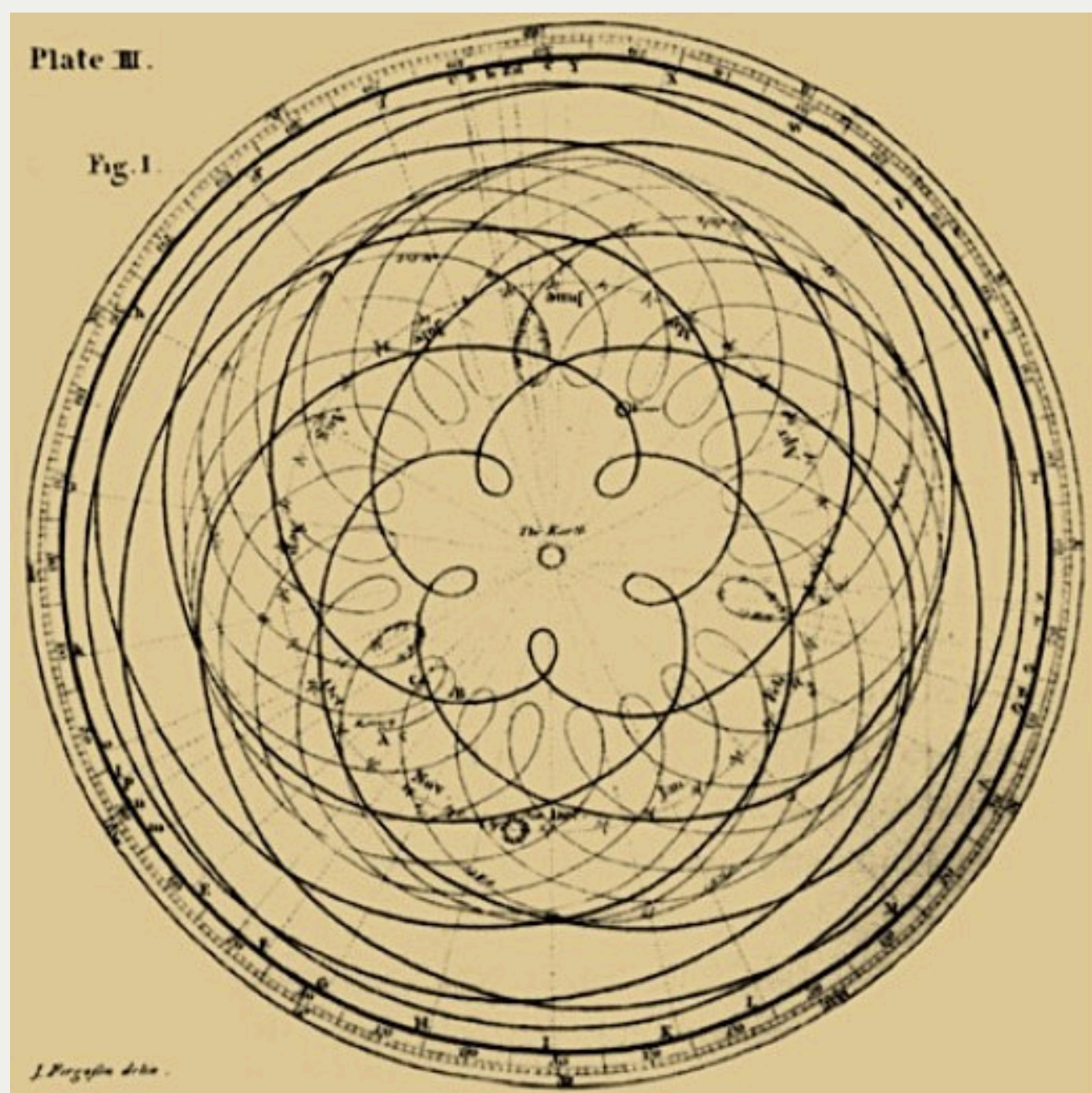
It is deeply engrained in us that the predictable, measurable and orderly way is the sane way and often we ourselves long to return to its safety. We join the masses and demonize ourselves for being late, having to cancel an appointment, showing up with a stain on our shirt, not having money in our wallet, not making that month's billing targets, not having had time to prepare for the presentation — when many of these effects are caused by a full heart that is actively engaged in the act of mothering.

The chaos, wildness and mess of mothering is beyond valuable, it is what makes the world spin around. Reminding ourselves of that — and if we have the chance, reminding the powers that be — feels like one of the greatest tasks of these times.

Link to the full article here: <https://elainerquinn.substack.com/p/the-value-of-chaos>

Chapter Six

Practicing and engaging with law in a way that feels good and natural (even if it breaks rules and convention)



Eventhough the endeavour of making law and practicing law is a natural and ancient one for human beings, it feels as though we have been engaging in it for a very long time in a way that is unnatural.

Law is just about structure - the external structures in our world, societies, and communities that hold everything together, that help us co-exist peacefully and thrive together. None of us can fully flow and blossom without the right structures to contain, hold and direct us.

We are engaging with these external structures all the time as lawyers from the highest level down to the most granular. We examine what they are, provide advice on how they operate, look at whether they function beneficially, advocate for changing them at times.

These external structures must— at some point — emerge from our inner structures or workings, and at their best, they will imbibe and reflect natural inner laws that are responsible for the organic evolution of our bodies, and the world around us. In these cases, I imagine the law would feel hugely satisfying to practice, like a natural and dynamic art allowing us to interpret and flow with it the way a musician interprets and flows with their music.

At their worst, these external structures are completely divorced from natural inner laws, unsupportive of our most natural and organic evolution. This is when our experience is more akin to wearing a stiff and uncomfortable suit of armour, than a legal musician flowing and skilfully interpreting his score.

You could call these natural inner laws by many names, for example, “wildness”, “creative life force”, “Love”. The name does not matter when we know its feel.

There is a reason many of us in the field of law do not feel right, the glove does not fit, we feel like we are wearing a “suit of armour”. The field as a whole has become distorted and knocked out of its original shape so much that, to enter the field, you have to leave behind your own natural flow and expression.

Link to the full article here: <https://elainerquinn.substack.com/p/natural-law-from-within-to-without>

Chapter Seven

Legal language can be precise, clear, transparent
- and loving



Instead of Data Protection, could we speak about 'Honouring Information'?

Instead of Controllers and Processors, could we speak about 'Information Guardians'?

Instead of Data Subjects, could we speak about 'Information Sharers' (or why not just use the word People)?

Could we imagine building data protection type laws, or any law, from a mutual starting foundation of: "We trust each other, we respect each other, we honour each other" and consider then how it would be written and structured?

Could we imagine that the person or business holding anothers' personal information might be thinking: "I am honest, I have integrity, I intend and always make every effort to do the right thing, I respect personal information provided to me and the person that provided it, I value their business, their engagement with me. I would never intentionally cause harm and will do use my best endeavours to guard all personal information provided to me."?

Could we imagine that the person sharing their personal information might be thinking: "I want to share myself, my information, my work because I want to share and engage with my communities, to buy goods and services, to learn, to work, to have fun. I respect others and their information, and expect to feel respected in the same way."?

Could our laws be made more aspirational, beautiful and reflect our highest standards for each other?

Law so strongly influences our social and economic relationships, shouldn't it affirm the best of our humanity? When we read the law or engage with it, shouldn't that warm, connected, relational feeling be transmitted to us? Shouldn't it also convey to us the basic position that people (and business) are good, and want to do the right thing?

Using language, terminology and meanings that force us into vague feelings of detachment, distrust, suspicion and confusion - and that unnecessarily put us on our guard - moves us further away from the best of ourselves and from a more generous reality. It also most likely makes more real the circumstances we are so carefully trying to avoid.

Link to the full article here: <https://elainerquinn.substack.com/p/protecting-data-or-honouring-information>

Chapter Eight

Feeling our heart and feeling our grief while practicing law



When I was working in insurance law, I used to have to scroll through reports of tragic global events everyday. These events —like the worst airline crashes, major weather catastrophes or terrorist attacks — are important headline news because they cause the largest financial losses for the industry. Over time, what unsettled me most about this task was not the feeling of upset and distress about the events themselves but noticing, on the contrary, that I could easily read these reports without feeling anything at all.

What feels important to address within law — and what is thankfully being talked about more and more — is that this disconnection from the emotional field has been promulgated as normal, natural and even necessary (to practice as a good lawyer and devise sound legal solutions) — so much so that it can be difficult to question it. But detaching and dissociating in a significant way from our hearts and feeling nature is not only not a positive skill — it is unnatural, unhealthy, and arguably very damaging if we consider its cumulative effects over a long period of time.

Is this right? I often used to think in response to a feeling of disorientation in my body that was difficult to ignore. I know it doesn't feel right. If I read news about an airline crash, a hurricane or other disaster I know that people and communities are suffering. Even if I do not quite know how to, isn't the most organic and natural response to that information to pause and to feel something?

And isn't the most generous response to consciously open my heart to my fellow beings, to connect with their suffering in some way, and to process it in whatever genuine way I can? Is this not a far more natural response and reflective of my interconnectedness with the rest of humanity and the earth?

Even if I do not intend it as such — isn't a non-feeling response, a closed-off response, reflective instead of a stance of separation, a denial of my interconnectedness with others, a presumption that their pain has nothing to do with me?

These questions of course do not just apply in the context of law, they are very real dilemmas in everyday life where we are all constantly in contact with news of tragic events around the world, and where we have very underdeveloped skills in knowing how to hold suffering — our own and others. It is still important though to start by asking the questions, to listen to the signals that may be coming from our own bodies and hearts, and to start to address what may be better, more skilful and healing responses.

What feels important to address within law — and what is thankfully being talked about more and more — is that this disconnection from the emotional field has been promulgated as normal, natural and even necessary (to practice as a good lawyer and devise sound legal solutions) — so much so that it can be difficult to question it. But detaching and dissociating in a significant way from our hearts and feeling nature is not only not a positive skill — it is unnatural, unhealthy, and arguably very damaging if we consider its cumulative effects over a long period of time.

Our hearts and feeling nature are our portals to connecting with the world around us. Through these faculties we come to feel (rather than just think in abstraction) how deeply connected we are with one another, how vulnerable we truly are, and how we depend on one another and the earth in a deeply entangled way. Without them — or by closing off and dissociating from them over time — we are not able to feel this anymore and our sense of separation is heightened.

As lawyers, we can clearly see this manifest when it may not seem so serious to be involved in projects that are harming to the environment, or when we can justify acting on behalf of a person that we know deep down is not well-intentioned, or when we simply can ingest large amounts of difficult information without feeling anything at all. We have closed off emotionally and energetically, and can no longer feel how harmful certain actions are to ourselves and others.

“Law is the most legitimating ideology of the status quo because it solidifies into concrete norms, rules and laws the way human beings interact and relate.” Peter Gabel

Link to the full article here: <https://elainerquinn.substack.com/p/our-hearts-and-feelings-connect-us>

Chapter Nine

Keep noticing the fear and constriction. A legal system permeated by love is not a fantasy



As a legal system that governs society when we are looking upon a person that has committed the worst type of crime, how do we respond? Typically, conventionally, currently the overwhelming response is one of rejection, casting off, expelling, disassociating, condemning the whole person and a sense that all will be better when they are gotten rid of.

How would this look different in a deeply loving context? I think of the ultimate Mother archetype, the all-loving, all-compassionate mother who loves her child no matter what the circumstance. And although I cannot speak to exactly what it would look like in practical terms I imagine that, in this context, this human being would ‘feel’, regardless of the crime they have committed, their essential humanity held, loved and accepted all the while of course having to account for their actions and having to accept the consequences.

I am aware that this can be a challenging and controversial conversation and that this ‘ideal’ may seem a million miles away however the more and more that this ideal of deep love and compassion [which does not at all have to be soft and gooey, it can be fierce and demanding] is EMBODIED and FELT in our legal and governance systems the closer and closer we will come to seeing this radical transformation.

Link to the full article here: <https://elainerquinn.substack.com/p/love-in-the-legal-system-the-archetype>

Enquiries for contemplation

Do you feel that your vocation with justice and law is tied to your qualifications and our existing legal systems?

Is your journey about bringing in, and embodying, the sacred feminine in the existing system or about stepping outside of the existing system completely and creating something new?

How do you feel about exploring a response to a legal issue someone brings you from the ground of your feminine nature and intuition? Before referring to an external body of laws and rules?

Are there ways you are overly focusing on external change in the legal system rather than looking deeply at the inner transformation that needs to take place first?

Consider the seed essence or principle in any law you may be dealing with? Can it be stripped back to one or two honourable principles (e.g. Trust, Forgiveness, Responsibility) to work with?

Can we continually bring awareness to the aspects of life we are valuing, revering, and prioritising in the practice of law?

In what ways does your practice of law feel unnatural or inhibit deeper natural expressions, impulses and yearnings as a human being?

What prevents real, heart-centred practice?

Could our written law, rules, agreements be made more aspirational, beautiful and reflect our highest standards for each other?

How does it feel in your body to be able to work within the realm of law and justice within a broader, more expansive perception of time? That is, organic, cyclical, spiralling rather than linear?

How does it feel in your body to work in the realm of law and justice with a far broader, more expansive perception of intelligence and knowing than only the intellect?

How does it feel in your body to work in the realm of law and justice with a far broader, more expansive perception of the “tools” we can use to resolve legal problems?

How does it feel to work in the realm of law and justice with a far broader, more expansive perception of what the ultimate authority for our laws and justice is?

How would our laws and legal systems transform if they were permeated, at the highest levels, by deep love, compassion and forgiveness?