The syllabus below suggests a time line we will address. However, as the class interest develops, emphasis may switch as we relate history to our current perceptions of the masculine and feminine. Author Leonard Schlain wondered, as he traveled the world, what happened to the Goddess? “For several thousand years, every people throughout the Fertile Crescent venerated a deity who personified the Great Goddess….Goddess worship, feminine values and women’s power depend on the ubiquity of the image. God worship, masculine values, and men’s domination of women are bound to the written word…” Thus, he concludes, “As we experience a resurgence of image in the media, we have an opportunity to explore a possibility whereby “…image supersedes the written word [and] feminine values and egalitarianism flourish.”

SYLLABUS
Session 1, Sept. 18, Preparation: Read Intro and Chapter 1 prior to class. Discuss the reading and personal response to our topic. Introduce course and share the takeaway our class members want.

Session 2, Sept 25. Preparation: Read Chapters 2 – 5. We will consider both the research on differences between boys and girls and the 3000-year-old Aegean civilization that demonstrated social equality. Last, time will be given to a discussion of relevant parts of the assigned reading.

Session 3, Oct.2. Preparation: Scan Chapters 6 – 11. Traits from Daring to be Ourselves will be summarized. Discussion will center on the courage to be feminine in an age of patriarchy and misogyny. Small groups will be formed to embrace characteristics mentioned in introduction and in readings from text.

Session 4, Oct. 9. Preparation: Scan Chapters 12 – 17. We will examine historical generalizations such as how men pursue autonomy and women yearn for intimacy. Small groups will explore the insoluble conflicts in marriage and parenting and share possible solutions in the past and present.

Session 5, Oct. 16. Preparation: Scan Chapters 18 – 25. Traveling through world cultures, we will look at those chapters that we found most compelling. We will choose research topics for reporting on historical figures who expand our understanding of gender roles and who carved a way of expressing their potential in society. Small group presentations will be on October 30th.

Session 6, Oct. 23. Preparation: Scan Chapters 26 – 33. For a fun read, add The Seeds of Life, the strange quest to discover where babies come from, or Mary Roach’s Bonk, about coupling, sex and science. We will explore the needs for “understanding” that challenged faith and personal assumptions.

Session 7, Oct. 30. We will look at images of women that are challenging current expectations in economics, politics, and culture. In small groups we will share our presentations based on research and personal experience. Movies such as RBG and Late Night are suggested. We will close with a summary from each group.

Session 8, Nov. 6. Preparation: Read Chapters 34, 35 & Epilogue. We will divide into small groups to share remaining research and images. We will pull together our final thoughts on the value of women.