

Archetypes and Their Shadows

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The Archetypes of the Council Suit help us identify and work with disowned shadow material. When we collaborate with these powerful energies, we can engage in shadow work more easily.

What is an Archetype?

Carl Jung believed that our minds come coded with patterns, like magnets attracting iron filings. These archetypal patterns influence us to perceive the world in a particular way. Archetypes have some interesting characteristics:

- They command our attention and lead us to action. Carolyn Myss suggests that archetypes have to do with a Sacred Contract our Soul made before our birth
- Archetypes act like magnetic fields. When they choose us, they command our attention and lead us to events, people and opportunities we might not otherwise notice.
- They are a light that draw us to grow according to our Soul's purpose
- They energize us to work through challenges. For example, staring at a blank canvas, the Artist pushes through to creativity.
- They endow us with passions that shape us just as the blacksmith's forge tempers fine steel.
- They move us from the familiar, secure and predictable to the world of the possible.
- Archetypal stories are told through great literature, film, poetry or plays: surviving against odds or how the shadow of a suppressed archetype made fatal errors leading to demise or rebirth. Our fascination with these stories hints at the archetype's claim on us.

Archetype Hunting

Look at the activities, people, stories, metaphors and physical objects in your life. You can also discover these energies in any enduring frustration or disappointment you experience, as well as anything you are passionate or to which you are devoted. Pay attention to:

- Activities in which you have a natural talent that need little hard work. You may take these for granted without realizing others have to work to accomplish what you do effortlessly.
- Any person or activity that brings up feelings of envy or longing, over and over again

Archetypal Shadows

The Shadow comes into being when something stands strongly in the Light. We may invest much self worth into those archetypal patterns strongly favored by others and the dominant culture. This dominant "good" self is like a tall building casting a long shadow. Strongly polarized values cast huge shadows. When they disconnect from the conscious mind they can fuel hatred and war. When we become aware of our strengths and the shadows they cast, we can use the shadow to add contrast and excitement to our lives, like a painting rich in shadow and light.

Shadow Boxing. Ken Wilbur calls it shadow boxing when we resist and fight shadow material.

- What do you fear, find disgusting or hate?
- What do you project on others as jealousy? Do you believe you could never do something because you don't have the right education, parents or gender?
- What do you complain or gripe about? What do you judge in yourself or others?

- What thoughts evoke strong emotions within you?
- Where do you draw lines between “us” and “them?”
- What activities in your life show up as compulsions?

Shadow Hugging. Our “shadow bag,” as Robert Bly calls it, can contain qualities we desire but believe we don’t possess. This positive projection is especially powerful when endowed by the Archetype.

- Is there something wonderful you strongly resist?
- Look at people you have on a pedestal

Storage Device. The shadow holds in safe keeping all of our potential, as well as the things we dislike about ourselves until we are ready to embrace them. In mid-life our curiosity can over ride our fear of behavior patterns that block our progress. At mid-life we take our longings and dreams more seriously, since we realize time is limited. Once we make friends with the shadow, we can become energized to find our hidden treasures.

Seeking Spirit. SoulCollage can make the job of reclaiming the shadow a spiritual adventure. Shadow work shines the light of awareness into unexplored rooms of the mansion where we live. It can be scary to open a creaky, dusty door of a room that has been locked for 40 years. But the archetypes energize us to explore the mansion and take residence in our True Self.

Soul Whispering: Taming the Shadow and Reclaiming Archetype Lurking in the Shadows.

Once you discover your archetypes and their shadow forms, you can incorporate them into the Board of Directors of “Self Inc.” The Soul or Higher Self is like the CEO of the Board. On the Board sit members of the four Suits. The archetypes are like special advisors whose expertise grants them more power than regular board members.

Our SoulCollage cards start the conversation with all of the members of our Board of Directors. We listen with calm curiosity to the different points of view. We develop a lively two-way communication with them. We release judgments and listen with compassion and curiosity to both the fearful, angry parts as well as the wise Council members who point the way to higher ground. We become active partners with the archetypes who have chosen us to carry out the mission of Soul.