

The Twelve Archetypes

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CASA: Center for Archetypal Studies and Applications

Resources: *Awakening the Heroes Within* and *What Story Are You Living?*

Online Test (Heroic Myth Index Test): <http://avidtran.tripod.com/archetype.html>

THE INNOCENT

Every era has myths of a golden age or of a promised land where life has been or will be perfect. The promise of the Innocent is that life need not be hard. Within each of us, the Innocent is the spontaneous, trusting child that, while a bit dependent, has the optimism to take the journey. The Innocent, fearing abandonment, seeks safety. Their greatest strength is the trust and optimism that endears them to others and so gain help and support on their quest. Their main danger is that they may be blind to their obvious weaknesses or perhaps deny them. They can also become dependent on others to fulfill their heroic tasks.

Goal	Remain in safety
Fear	Abandonment
Dragon/Problem	Deny it or seek rescue
Response to Task	Fidelity, discernment
Gift/ Virtue	Optimism, trust, hope, faith, simplicity
Pitfalls	Naiveté, childish dependence, denial, obliviousness
Addictive Quality	Denial
Addiction	Consumerism/sugar/cheerfulness

Shadow Side: Evidenced in a capacity for denial so that you do not let yourself know what is really going on. You may be hurting yourself and others, but you will not acknowledge it. You may also be hurt, but you will repress that knowledge as well. Or, you believe what others say even when their perspective is directly counter to your own inner knowing.

THE ORPHAN

The Orphan understands that everyone matters, just as they are. Down-home and unpretentious, it reveals a deep structure influenced by the wounded or orphaned child that expects very little from life, but that teaches us with empathy, realism, and street smarts. The Orphan, fearing exploitation, seeks to regain the comfort of the womb and neonatal safety in the arms of loving parents. To fulfill their quest they must go through the agonies of the developmental stages they have missed. Their strength is the interdependence and pragmatic realism that they had to learn at an early age. A hazard is that they will fall into the victim mentality and so never achieve a heroic position.

Goal	Regain safety
Fear	Exploitation
Dragon/Problem	Is victimized by it
Response to Task	Process and feel pain fully
Gift/ Virtue	Interdependence, realism, resilience, empathy
Pitfalls	Cynicism, tendency to be the victim or victimize, chronic complaining
Addictive Quality	Cynicism
Addiction	Powerlessness/worrying

Shadow Side: The victim, who blames his or her incompetence, irresponsibility, or even predatory behavior on others and expects special treatment and exemption from life because he or she has been so victimized or is so fragile. When this Shadow of the positive Orphan is in control of our lives, we will attack even people who are trying to help us, harming them and ourselves simultaneously. Or, we may collapse and become dysfunctional (i.e. "You can't expect anything from me. I'm so wounded/hurt/incompetent").

THE WARRIOR

When everything seems lost the Warrior rides over the hill and saves the day. Tough and courageous, this archetype helps us set and achieve goals, overcome obstacles, and persist in difficult times, although it also tends to see others as enemies and to think in either/or terms. The Warrior is relatively simple in their thought patterns, seeking simply to win whatever confronts them, including the dragons that live inside the mind and their underlying fear of weakness. Their challenge is to bring meaning to what they do, perhaps choosing their battles wisely, which they do using courage and the warrior's discipline.

Goal	Win
Fear	Weakness
Dragon/Problem	Stay/confront it
Response to Task	Fight only for what really matters
Gift/ Virtue	Courage, discipline, determination, skill
Pitfalls	Fear of impotence leading to ruthlessness, arrogance
Addictive Quality	Stoicism
Addiction	Achievement/success

Shadow Side: The villain, who uses Warrior skills for personal gain without thought of morality, ethics, or the good of the whole group. It is also active in our lives any time we feel compelled to compromise our principles in order to compete, win, or get our own way. (For example, the shadow Warrior is rampant in the business world today.) It is also seen in a tendency to be continually embattled, so that one perceives virtually everything that happens as a slight, a threat, or a challenge to be confronted.

THE CAREGIVER

The Caregiver is an altruist, moved by compassion, generosity, and selflessness to help others. Although prone to martyrdom and enabling behaviors, the inner Caregiver helps us raise our children, aid those in need, and build structures to sustain life and health. Caregivers first seek to help others, which they do with compassion and generosity. A risk they take is that in their pursuit to help others they may end up being harmed themselves. They dislike selfishness, especially in themselves, and fear what it might make them.

Goal	Help others
Fear	Selfishness
Dragon/Problem	Take care of it or those it harms
Response to Task	Give without maiming self or others
Gift/ Virtue	Compassion, generosity, nurturance, community
Pitfalls	Martyrdom, enabling others, codependence, guilt-tripping
Addictive Quality	Rescuing
Addiction	Caretaking/codependence

Shadow Side: The suffering martyr, who controls others by making them feel guilty. "Look at all I sacrificed for you!" It evidences itself in all manipulative or devouring behaviors, in which the individual uses caretaking to control or smother others. It is also found in codependence, a compulsive need to take care of or rescue others.

THE SEEKER

The Seeker leaves the known to discover and explore the unknown. This inner rugged individual braves loneliness and isolation to seek out new paths. Often oppositional, this iconoclastic archetype helps us discover our uniqueness, our perspectives, and our callings. Seekers are looking for something that will improve their life in some way, but in doing so may not realize that they have much already inside themselves. They embrace learning and are ambitious in their quest and often avoid the encumbrance of support from others. Needing to 'do it themselves', they keep moving until they find their goal (and usually their true self too).

Goal	Search for better life
Fear	Conformity
Dragon/Problem	Flee from it
Response to Task	Be true to deeper self
Gift/ Virtue	Autonomy, ambition, identity, expanded possibilities
Pitfalls	Inability to commit, chronic disappointment, alienation, and loneliness
Addictive Quality	Self-centeredness
Addiction	Independence/perfection

Shadow Side: The Perfectionist, always striving to measure up to an impossible goal or to find the “right” solution. We see this in people whose main life activity is self-improvement, going from the health club to yet another self-improvement course, etc., yet who never feel ready to commit to accomplishing anything.

THE LOVER

The Lover archetype governs all kinds of love—from parental love, to friendship, to spiritual love—but we know it best in romance. Although it can bring all sorts of heartache and drama, it helps us experience pleasure, achieve intimacy, make commitments, and follow our bliss. The Lover seeks the bliss of true love and the syzygy of the divine couple. They often show the passion that they seek in a relationship in their energy and commitment to gaining the reciprocal love of another. They fear both being alone and losing the love that they have gained, driving them to constantly sustain their love relationships.

Goal	Bliss
Fear	Loss of love
Dragon/Problem	Love it
Response to Task	Follow your bliss
Gift/ Virtue	Passion, commitment, enthusiasm, sensual pleasure
Pitfalls	Objectifying others, romance/sex addictions, out of control sexuality
Addictive Quality	Intimacy problems
Addiction	Relationships/sex

Shadow Side: Includes the sirens (luring others from their quests), seducers (using love for conquest), sex or relationship addicts (feeling addicted to love), and anyone who is unable to say no when passion descends, or is totally destroyed when a lover leaves.

THE DESTROYER

The Destroyer embodies repressed rage about structures that no longer serve life even when these structures still are supported by society or by our conscious choices. Although this archetype can be ruthless, it weeds the garden in ways that allow for new growth. The Destroyer is a paradoxical character whose destructiveness reflects the death drive and an inner fear of annihilation. As a fighter, they are thus careless of their own safety and may put others in danger too. Their quest is to change, to let go of their anger or whatever force drives them and return to balance, finding the life drive that will sustain them. Living on the cusp of life and death, they are often surprisingly humble.

Goal	Metamorphosis
Fear	Annihilation
Dragon/Problem	Allow dragon to slay it
Response to Task	Let go
Gift/ Virtue	Humility, metamorphosis, revolution, capacity to let go
Pitfalls	Doing harm to self/others, out of control anger, terrorist tactics
Addictive Quality	Self-destructiveness
Addiction	Suicide/self-destructive habits

Shadow Side: Includes all self-destructive behaviors—addictions, compulsions, or activities that undermine intimacy, career success, or self-esteem—and all behaviors—such as emotional or physical abuse, murder, rape—that have destructive effects on others.

THE CREATOR

The Creator archetype fosters all imaginative endeavors, from the highest art to the smallest innovation in lifestyle or work. Adverse to stasis, it can cause us to overload our lives with constant new projects; yet, properly channeled, it helps us express ourselves in beautiful ways. Creators, fearing that all is an illusion, seek to prove reality outside of their minds. A critical part of their quest is in finding and accepting themselves, discovering their true identity in relation to the external world.

Goal	Identity
Fear	Inauthenticity
Dragon/Problem	Claims it as part of the self
Response to Task	Self-creation, self-acceptance
Gift/ Virtue	Creativity, vision, individuality, aesthetics, imagination, skill, vocation
Pitfalls	Self-indulgence, poverty, creating messes, prima-donna behaviors
Addictive Quality	Obsessiveness
Addiction	Work/creativity

Shadow Side: Shows itself to be obsessive, creating so that so many possibilities are being imagined that none can be acted upon fully. (You might remember a film called *The Pumpkin Eater*, in which a woman got pregnant every time she was face-to-face with the vacuousness of her life. So, too, we can fill our emptiness with yet another inessential project, challenge, or new thing to do, as she filled herself with another baby. One variety of this is workaholism, in which we can always think of just one more thing to do.

THE RULER

The Ruler archetype inspires us to take responsibility for our own lives, in our fields of endeavor, and in the society at large. If he/she overcomes the temptation to dominate others, the developed Ruler creates environments that invite in the gifts and perspectives of all concerned. The Ruler's quest is to create order and structure and hence an effective society in which the subjects of the Ruler can live productive and relatively happy lives. This is not necessarily an easy task, as order and chaos are not far apart, and the Ruler has to commit him or herself fully to the task. The buck stops with them and they must thus be wholly responsible -- for which they need ultimate authority.

Goal	Order
Fear	Chaos
Dragon/Problem	Find its constructive uses
Response to Task	Take full responsibility for your life
Gift/ Virtue	Responsibility, control, sovereignty, system savvy
Pitfalls	Rigidity, controlling behaviors, attitude of entitlement, elitism
Addictive Quality	High control needs
Addiction	Control/codependence

Shadow Side: The ogre tyrant, insisting on his or her own way and banishing creative elements of the kingdom (or the psyche) to gain control at any price. This is the King or Queen who indulges in self-righteous rages and yells, "Off with his head." Often people act this way when they are in positions of authority (like parenting) but do not yet know how to handle the attendant responsibility. This also includes people who are motivated by a strong sense to control.

THE MAGICIAN

The Magician archetype searches out the fundamental laws of science and/or metaphysics to understand how to transform situations, influence people, and make visions into realities. If the Magician can overcome the temptation to use power manipulatively, it galvanizes energies for good. The Magician's quest is not to 'do magic' but to transform or change something or someone in some way. The Magician has significant power and as such may be feared. They may also fear themselves and their potential to do harm. Perhaps their ultimate goal is to transform themselves, achieving a higher plane of existence.

Goal	Transformation
Fear	Evil sorcery
Dragon/Problem	Transform it
Response to Task	Align self with cosmos
Gift/ Virtue	Personal power, transformative, catalytic, healing power
Pitfalls	Manipulation of others, disconnection with reality, cultist guru-like
Addictive Quality	Dishonesty (image/illusion)
Addiction	Power/hallucinogenic drugs, marijuana

Shadow Side: The evil sorcerer, transforming better into lesser options. We engage in such evil sorcery anytime we belittle ourselves or another, or lessen options and possibilities, resulting in diminished self-esteem. The shadow Magician is also the part of us capable of making ourselves and others ill through negative thoughts and actions.

THE SAGE

The Sage archetype seeks the truths that will set us free. Especially if the Sage overcomes the temptation of dogma, it can help us become wise, to see the world and ourselves objectively, and to course-correct based on objective analyses of the results of our actions and choices. The Sage is a seeker after truth and enlightenment and journeys far in search of the next golden nugget of knowledge. The danger for the sage and their deep fear is that their hard-won wisdom is built on the sand of falsehood. Their best hope is that they play from a position of objective honesty and learn to see with a clarity that knows truth and untruth.

Goal	Truth
Fear	Deception
Dragon/Problem	Transcend it
Response to Task	Attain enlightenment
Gift/ Virtue	Wisdom, nonattachment, knowledge, skepticism
Pitfalls	Being overly critical, pomposity, impracticality, lacking of feeling/empathy
Addictive Quality	Judgmentalism
Addiction	Being right/tranquilizers

Shadow Side: The unfeeling judge—cold, rational, heartless, dogmatic, often pompous—evaluating us or others and saying we (or they) are not good enough or are not doing it right.

THE FOOL OR JESTER

The Fool/Jester archetype urges us to enjoy the process of our lives. Although the Fool/Jester can be prone to laziness and dissipation, the positive Fool/Jester invites us all out to play--showing us how to turn our work, our interactions with others, and even the most mundane tasks into FUN. The goal of the Fool/Jester is perhaps the wisest goal of all, which is just to enjoy life as it is, with all its paradoxes and dilemmas. What causes most dread in the Fool/Jester is a lack of stimulation and being 'not alive'. They must seek to 'be', perhaps as the Sage, but may not understand this.

Goal	Enjoyment
Fear	Nonaliveness
Dragon/Problem	Play tricks on it
Response to Task	Trust in the process
Gift/ Virtue	Freedom, humor, life lived in the moment, exuberant joy
Pitfalls	Debauchery, irresponsibility, sloth, cruel jokes, con-artisty
Addictive Quality	Inebriation
Addiction	Excitement/cocaine/alcohol

Shadow Side: A glutton, sloth, or lecher wholly defined by the lusts and urges of the body without any sense of dignity or self-control.
