



Sober Buddha
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FOUR SURVIVAL ARCHETYPES IN ACTION

THE LEARNING BENEFIT:

This is an introduction to the world of the archetypes of the collective unconscious. You will learn to understand and manage the four survival archetypes - the Wounded Child, the Victim, the Prostitute and the Saboteur. These internal “characters” usually operate in your unconscious and affect your thoughts, mood and actions without you knowing it. By analyzing them, you can take advantage of their light attributes and diminish their shadow attributes.

THE FACTS:

An archetype, according to Wikipedia, is:

"A generic, idealized model of a person, object or concept...."

You can think of archetypes like stereotypical characters in movies or books. They always act exactly the same way. A villain archetype is always a bad guy who harms others. A hero is always the strong person who defeats the villain. Your unconscious mind is populated with archetypes which cause you to think and act in certain ways. Because the archetypes influence us unconsciously, we get confused and surprised by how often we think and act in ways that harm us and others.

Light And Shadow Qualities

According to Carolyn Myss, author of *The Language of Archetypes*, each archetype has two sides - a Light Attribute which helps you heal yourself and a Shadow Attribute which continues to harm you. For example, in the Addict archetype from Myss' *Archetype Cards*, the Light Attribute is the ability to *'recognize and confront addictive behaviors.'* The Shadow Attribute *"compromises integrity and honesty and allows an addictive pattern to have authority over your inner spirit."*

From this example, you can see how an archetype is neither all good nor all bad, but actually serves to inform you of where you stand on the continuum from unhealthy thinking and behavior to healthier ways of being.

Archetypes are the perfect vehicles for working with addiction, because they are animated and lifelike. People can relate to characters more easily than abstract psychological theories and language. Characters touch our thoughts and emotions directly and are easy to relate to. This makes them a perfect match for addicted people whose thinking tends to be emotional and dramatic in the first place.

Endless Cycle

These four archetypes can perpetuate the cycle of addiction if they are not managed. You start blaming your past (Wounded Child) for all your problems in the present. You then become passive and expect others to feel sorry for you (Victim). You become so exhausted and frightened about your life circumstances that you'll do anything, including sacrificing your personal integrity, just to feel physically safe (Prostitute). Finally, just when you are thinking of breaking out of this cycle, you do something reckless and harmful (Saboteur) to create a brand new wound, which makes you the Wounded Child again and again. In addition, it is the Addict archetype that teams up with the Saboteur to make you relapse! Too bad the Healer isn't enlivened enough to help, but that's another chapter.

Light And Shadow

Here are descriptions of the light and shadow attributes for each archetype. Remember that when you notice a light attribute in yourself, you should develop it further. When the shadow attribute arises, it is a warning not to continue further down the path of the shadow negativity, but to rise above it. The shadow is not actually bad, it is simply a warning sign to manage a potentially troublesome behavior before it gets out of hand.

Wounded Child

The Wounded Child is the archetype who has a tendency to blame problems on hurtful past life experiences.

Wounded Child Light Attribute - Has concern for other Wounded Children and attempts to help them. Forgives those who have caused harm.

Wounded Child Shadow Attribute - Blames interpersonal problems on childhood hurts. Does not want to forgive and work toward healing.

Victim

The Victim is the archetype who has a tendency to be passive and let others take advantage.

Victim Light Attribute - Creates boundaries that keep others from hurting you. You refuse to hurt others.

Victim Shadow Attribute - Looking for pity because you have been hurt. Failure to protect yourself from hurtful people and situations.

Prostitute

The Prostitute is the archetype who has felt wounded and victimized for so long that the decision is made to give up on trying to be independent and to rely on others for physical and material safety.

Prostitute Light Attribute - Motivates you to succeed on the basis of your own strengths without sacrificing your own values.

Prostitute Shadow Attribute - Compels you to seek physical security at any cost.

Saboteur

The Saboteur is the archetype who is afraid to discover how powerful he really can be, so he constantly says and does things that create problems and destroy or slow down his chances to succeed.

Saboteur Light Attribute - Reminds you how powerful you really are and how often you delay your recovery by acting negatively.

Saboteur Shadow Attribute - Makes you blind to your self-destructive tendencies or ways in which you cause harm to others.

THE WRITING EXERCISE:

Describe how you see the Light and Shadow Attributes of each archetype manifesting in your life today. They constantly move within an endless cycle. Write actions you can take to create more light and reduce shadow.

Wounded Child

blames others for problems
seeks pity
immobilized by pain

Victim

boundariless need for pity
opens self to more rejection
expects worst, self-fulfilling prophecy

Prostitute

Ignores self integrity for temporary material safety
Sacrifices inner spirit for material safety

Saboteur

self-destructs constantly at just the wrong moment
perpetuates wounding

THE ARCHETYPES IN YOUR LIFE

Wounded Child Light

Example – *“I can be more helpful and understanding of my friends who still struggle with their family problems. I can listen more and try to help them.”*

Wounded Child Shadow

Example - *“Maybe I didn’t have the happiest childhood, but that’s no reason for me to give up on my dreams of having my own family.”*

Victim Light

Victim Shadow

Prostitute Light

Prostitute Shadow

Saboteur Light

Saboteur Shadow
