

An Overview of the Intentional Heart-centered Approach to Archetypes*
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*The psychology of archetypes was spearheaded by Carl Jung

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The intentional heart-centered approach to archetypes is based on the idea of Archetypal Wholeness which involves two key concepts:

- 1) Archetypal Maximization**
- 2) Archetypal Inversion**

Archetypal Wholeness

In modern times, it has been the pioneering work of Carl Jung that has helped us understand that all the different archetypal instincts reside within each and every human being. Of great importance was Jung's assertion of the need to embrace the wholeness of our being (i.e.—embracing those archetypes that are very familiar and prominent in us as well as those that are unfamiliar and largely undeveloped).

Inspired and informed by Jung's work, the intentional heart-centered approach follows in asserting that the process of self development (and peacemaking) is about striving toward fully embracing of our humanity. From this heart-centered perspective, it is suggested that we do great harm to ourselves and each other when we restrict our manner of being solely to those "dominant" patterns or habits of thought and behavior most familiar to us. To reject or "exile" any instinctual aspect of our personhood is to deny ourselves the great birthright of wholeness that characterizes the very essence of the highly diverse human heart. Further, to reject or "exile" any instinctual aspect of our humanity is to create a false polarization within ourselves, where the "dominant" archetypes are championed and the lower or "exiled" are shunned. Such polarization fosters an inner stress that is harmful to our personal well-being and our relationships.

This concept of wholeness is important both individually and collectively. Because we shun unfamiliar instinctual energies within ourselves, our tendency is to shun them in others as well. Rejecting what is unfamiliar to us leads to divisiveness, and ultimately can spiral us into expressions of emotional (and physical) violence. Thus a commitment toward wholeness within our own selves is at the same time a commitment toward realizing a greater possibility of peace and non-violence within our families, communities, and world. The heart-centered approach to archetypal wholeness continuously highlights this interrelationship between the micro and the macro, the personal, and the global.

So, archetypal wholeness is the overarching context of our discussion. With this in mind, let us explore the different facets of wholeness (i.e. "maximization" and "inversion").

Archetypal Maximization

As we said before, each and all of the archetypal instincts are innate in every person (and wholeness is the overarching aim) it is important to recognize that in each person some archetypes will be “dominant” and others will be less prominent (or very low or “exiled”). Let’s take sixty year old Judy for example. Throughout the course of her entire life, Judy has been very assertive and has taken many stands for what she believes in. We could thus say the archetype of The Warrior is a dominant part of Judy’s nature. On the other hand, she has never been one to take big risks or try new things. This is most likely a good indication that the archetype of The Adventurer is very low (or exiled) within her.

Far from the common notion of “toning down” the most prevalent aspects of who we are, the idea of archetypal fullness encourages just the opposite. A primary task of the heart-centered journey is to develop a very conscious and intentional relationship with our most dominant archetypes and then maximize their power and impact through ensuring their full expression in the way we live our day-to-day lives. From this perspective, the dominant archetypes are those that define the very essence of a person’s authentic nature. To maximize – to fully express – our most pronounced archetypal tendencies is to allow the full flourishing of our spirit’s specific and particular individuality.

Along with developing an intentional relationship with our dominant archetypes and maximizing their gifts, we go even further toward archetypal fullness through ennobling. To ennoble our dominant archetypes – and thus move toward a greater fullness of being – is to recognize the importance of intentionally investing these instinctual energies in thoughts, behaviors, and work that serves a greater vision of meaning and community. Such investment of our dominant archetypal energy takes us beyond the provincial and ego-bound ways of being that can often characterize our habitual manner of living. The archetypal instincts that live in us are so much bigger than us. They can be thought of as the great and epic powers of the spirit (or life) that have been entrusted to our care. Thus, to restrict their power to merely helping us get through our lives in a superficial and individualistic way is to severely diminish their potential for bringing breakthrough and transformation within our relationships, workplaces, communities, and world. Put simply, powers within us that are greater than us are intended to serve life in a way that extends far beyond us. By ennobling our dominant archetypes we align and harmonize ourselves with life in a way that allows a more epic expression of our full humanity.

Archetypal Maximization involves the full affirmation (not toning down) of our particular natural tendencies through maximizing and ennobling them to the greatest extent possible. However, maximization without the invitation of the unfamiliar (or exiled) parts of ourselves can leave us lopsided and incomplete. This is where the concept of inversion becomes a vital tool for full self development and relationship building. In fact, it will be made clear that inversion is an essential part of empowering, maximizing, and ennobling one’s dominant archetypes.

Before we begin our discussion about Archetypal Inversion, let's look at some important definitions.

The Shadow

The shadow is a term used by Carl Jung to describe the part of our personality and spirit that is not yet perceived by our consciousness. For Jung the shadow can be a very constructive force as well as a very destructive one. The key in dealing with our shadow is consciousness.

All archetypes have a gift, a lack, and a deconstructive side. Without a committed quest for self development we remain unaware of most of our archetypal energies – in their constructive and deconstructive aspects. Our awareness of the great gifts of our archetypal energies, as well as their potential to harm, can remain in the shadow. We progressively retrieve our instinctual creative strength as we evolve in consciousness and intentionality. As we gain deeper consciousness, we are able to take responsibility for their potential to harm. When we become intentional about our shadows we acquire the ability to differentiate between its creative side and its deconstructive side. We begin mining the creative side of the shadow for its rich gifts and amazing aptitude to love and produce. The power of the creative aspect of the shadow is that which allows us to breakthrough in stuck places in our loving and in our achieving. As we get to know our particular archetypal make up we also become aware of its hidden propensity to deconstruct love, relationship bonds, and dreams. We take responsibility for confronting the deconstructive aspect of our shadow and for staying clear of its introjected oppressive ways.

There are two fundamental aspects of the shadow: the creative shadow and the destructive shadow, and each of these have two essential components:

The Creative Shadow:

- 1) The inherent lacks in our personality resulting from our unique creative archetypal make up. [Referred to as archetypal lacks]
- 2) The untapped creativity that resides in our low or exiled archetypes. [Referred to as the emerging archetypal shadow]

It is very important to remember that an archetypal lack or an emerging archetype is a very creative asset when we relate to it intentionally and purposefully. However, each of them can drain our relationships and paralyze our creativity when left in the dark. If we are unconscious of our creative shadows, we become argumentative and defensive (if not aggressive) whenever others bring them to our attention.

It is important to distinguish the creative shadow from the destructive shadow:

The Destructive Shadow:

- 1) The destructive tendency in all archetypal make ups. [Referred to as the destructive shadow]
- 2) The vortex of a lack of consciousness and destructive behavior that emanates from a takeover of the center of our consciousness by an archetype (even if such a takeover happens when the archetype is in a functional behavioral routine). [Referred to as a vortex shadow]

The archetypal instinct is there to serve the desire or the dream of the center of our being (the heart). When we are unconscious, a repetitive archetypal behavior (good or dysfunctional) can take over and blind us to the longing of our heart, and thus, an archetypal vortex is formed. A vortex can be obvious or subtle, and in both cases the vortex drains our spirit of its generative greatness.

*Now that we have distinguished the creative from the destructive shadow, let's return to our exploration of the Creative Shadow starting with its first aspect: **Archetypal Lacks**.*

Archetypal Lacks are the inherent lacks in our personality resulting from our unique creative archetypal make up.

The unique archetypal blueprint of our spirit provides us with special and powerful creative gifts. Yet this same configuration of our dominant archetypes also deprives us from some creative attributes. Archetypal creativity is possible only because of what is included and what is excluded in a specific grouping of dominant archetypes. Gifts are not possible without lacks.

Yet a common (mistaken) belief is that we could have our archetypal gifts without the lacks that accompany them. This is not possible since our archetypal lacks are those which allow our archetypal gifts to arise and flower to their utmost.

It is important at this point to distinguish an archetypal lack from a lack resulting from incomplete growth [psychological, ethical or spiritual]. An archetypal lack is due to the nature of that archetype. A lack due to an incomplete growth is tied to our level of maturity and is independent from the structure of the archetype itself. For example, an inability to fully express one's self is not an archetypal lack, but rather is a psychological lack. A tendency to cover or manipulate the truth is not an archetypal lack, but rather is an ethical lack. A difficulty with focusing on what is essential is not an archetypal lack, but rather is a spiritual lack.

Our archetypal lacks deprive us, as well as others, of certain important qualities. Yet these lacks are essential for the unfolding of our creativity. They provide us with an inner empty space, or vulnerability, that spurs our specific archetypal gifts to unfold to the maximum of their potential. Understanding the inescapable relationship between gifts and lacks is crucial. The study of people who access their creative genius in any field, be it science, art, or religion, shows how the ability of these people to express the edge of their creativity was paired with considerable lacks in other aspects of comprehension and behavior. Without grasping the mutuality between gifts and lacks we endanger the well being of our spirit as well as the peaceful harmony in our relationships. We do this by:

- Feeling ashamed of our lacks, or at least thinking less of ourselves because of them.
- When others point to our lacks or complain about them, becoming defensive and use our energy trying to prove that we do not have these lacks or at least that the impact of our lacks on others is minimal. Such defensiveness makes our partners feel unseen in their discomfort and can escalate into unhealthy tension in our relationships.
- Attempting to heal our lacks by trying to "fill" these lacks [trying to become without lacks]. By doing so, we injure our spirit in pursuing an impossible task that goes against the grain of the creative process.
- Denying our lacks and therefore undermining the possibility of creative inversion.
- Trying to avoid thinking about our lacks and missing out on intentionally mining them for their fertile gifts.
- Shaming others, including our relationship partners, our children, or co-workers, for the lacks of their archetypal make up and wishing them to not have lacks (which in turn, impedes the other's flow of creativity and love).

How to approach lacks from an intentional, heart-centered approach:

- Become conscious of your lacks; claim them with respect and dignity.
- Empathize generously with those who suffer and complain about your lacks; do not attempt to belittle or disprove their experience, rather validate it fully.
- Mine your lacks for the creativity they paradoxically unleash in you. In other words allow yourself to be sculpted by your lacks. Your lacks redirect your generative power to your gifts. Embracing your lacks releases your energies from the futile attempt to be free of lacks, and rather, makes these energies available to where you are most productive.
- Invert, i.e.—call on your low archetypal energies to support your dominant creative features while remembering that:
 - a) Inversion is essential for wholeness.
 - b) Inversion can happen only at twenty-five percent. It cannot make you “lack-free” (the illusion of Godlike totality).
 - c) The purpose of inversion is to empower your dominant traits, not to diminish them or replace them.

The Emerging Archetypal Shadow is the second aspect of the Creative Shadow and is defined as the part of ourselves that is less developed or undeveloped (our low or “exiled” archetypes) that is emerging. Archetypal Inversion is a very powerful tool used to facilitate this process.

Archetypal Inversion as a Continuous Lived Experience: In speaking about archetypes, Carl Jung said: “The discarded stone becomes the cornerstone.” By this Jung meant – in essence – that those parts of our selves – those archetypes – that have been most shunned or pushed into the shadows are like the missing pieces of a picture-puzzle. To deny one piece its place as part of the whole is to diminish the effectiveness, impact and beauty of the entire puzzle’s portrait. So too with us as human beings; to discard any aspect of our humanity is to diminish our potential for full effectiveness, full impact and a wholesome expression of our spirit’s beauty.

When we invite an archetype that is low or exiled to support our dominant archetypal structure, we unlock the door for a higher level of creativity. We free our dominant archetypal structure from the rigidity that can keep it stuck. While our low and exiled archetypes can be called into action only partially (about 25%), they allow the dominant archetypes to be unleashed to their full potential, freeing them from the paralyzing effect of uni-dimensionality and its unhealthy rigidity.

Through inversion as a continuous lived experience, our task is to flavor our everyday living with archetypal energies that are unfamiliar (or perhaps even completely foreign to us). The idea of inversion as a continued lived experience is not about an attempt to replace our dominant archetypes with those that are undeveloped in us, nor to equalize the dominant and the undeveloped. From the heart-centered perspective, such attempts are futile and can even be very damaging to our spirit (as it becomes a forced attempt to be someone we are not). The heart-centered approach says: Those archetypal instincts most dominant in us have always been most dominant in us and will remain most dominant in us. However, through a continuous process of inversion, we constantly enhance and empower our effectiveness through flavoring our manner of being with archetypal energies that are not very developed in us. By doing so and thus establishing a connection between our most dominant tendencies and least familiar tendencies, we unleash a power and potential of being that can only be unleashed through activating (albeit in differing quantities) the full range of archetypal energies that dwell within us. To use a simple analogy: It’s like an electrical circuit. For the power and juice to flow, the circuit must be completed. Both poles must be connected to each other if the electricity is to flow.

Thus, to summarize it could be said that: Wholeness = Archetypal Maximization + Archetypal Inversion as a continuous lived experience. It is important to remember that wholeness is understood as the grand aim of the self development journey. But how do we strive toward becoming more and more whole? From the intentional heart-centered perspective, archetypal maximization [maximizing our dominant archetypes] and archetypal inversion [calling forth our low and exiled archetypes to support our dominants] are the keys that unlock the doors to wholeness.

Now we will look at a special archetypal mega-tool that allows us to unlock moments of divisiveness and alienation with our romantic partners and others.

Archetypal Inversion as a "Moment of Impact"

Along with inversion as a continuous lived experience, there is a special experience of inversion that can be utilized at particular times when we want to breakthrough a stuck place or bring powerful impact to a situation. Different from inversion as a continuous lived experience (that is a way we aspire to live on a day-to-day basis) inversion as a moment of impact is called upon in special circumstances. It is an important relationship concept that the heart-centered approach stresses.

Such special moments of inversion – these moments of impact – occur through remaining grounded in the values of our dominant archetypes. At the same time, we intentionally call forth one of our low or exiled archetypes and make the choice to act from this low/exiled archetype. By doing so, we quite literally bring a new and fresh perspective to the situation at hand. Through this special moment of inversion, we hold back the behavior we would normally choose as a result of acting from our usual dominant archetypes. And instead, we replace this familiar manner of behavior with one that is unexpected.

Through such acts of inversion, we create special moments of impact through building a bridge to the other person. It is a great tool in all relationships to break the deadlocked places of repetitive stuck-ness. We all have experienced those times when a relationship reaches an impasse. We are stuck. We keep proceeding in the same way and keep getting the same polarized and divisive result. At such moments, through inversion, we can reach toward the other person. We can build a bridge. We can transform the situation through choosing a manner of expression that while unfamiliar and uncomfortable to us, is at the same time, highly affirming of the other person's archetypal way of seeing and relating to the world. During such a moment of impact, through accessing an unfamiliar part of ourselves, we choose to act and speak in a way that acknowledges the "otherness" of the one we are relating to. By accessing an unfamiliar archetype within ourselves, we might witness ourselves speaking in a way that sounds foreign to us. Yet, at the same time, those words (while unfamiliar to us) are music to the other person's ear as they connect with (and affirm) the archetypal essence of the other person.

Such moments can seem magical. Through acting from one of our unfamiliar archetypes, we connect with our own "otherness." And in turn, this moment of inversion allows us to establish a common ground of connection with the "other" who sits across from us. This way of impact inversion is thus considered a moment of "matching" and reconciliation as it unleashes tremendous possibilities for greater expressions of passion, love, respect and closeness in our relationships. We match others in ways that would have been otherwise impossible. We reach toward others and greet them on their own archetypal soul-turf. We thus build bridges that allow the energies of heart-full connection to flow unheeded.

In summary, Inversion breaks the trance of the repetitive and the familiar and...

- HELPS TO FREES THE LONGING and DESIRES OF THE HEART FROM A STUCK and REPETITIVE PATTERN THAT BLINDS OUR CONSCIOUSNESS
- SUPPORTS THE DOMINANT ARCHETYPES IN THEIR GROWTH, EXPANSION, AND GENERATIVITY
- ALLOWS WHAT IS BEING BORN IN US TO BE WELCOMED BY OTHERS
- HELPS FREE OUR SOUL PASSION
- SIGNIFICANTLY ENRICHES OUR RELATIONSHIPS
- SHIFTS OUR CONSCIOUSNESS TOWARD THE EVOLUTIONARY REALIZATION THAT THE “REJECTED STONE IS TO BECOME THE CORNERSTONE” - IE THAT WHAT IS REJECTED IN OUR LIFE AND SOCIETY IS THE KEY TO OUR GREATEST BLESSINGS
- USHERS IN THE UNFAMILIAR “TWIN” ENERGY [soul expansive versus soul measured]
- SHARPENS THE CHARISMA OF OUR SPIRIT
- ALLOWS US TO MOVE FURTHER TOWARD THE WHOLENESS OF OUR BEING