

Years ago, I had a dream where Angels asked me to write an article about my healing process and to get it published. Thanks to One Spirit for publishing this article, making my dream come true. Another dream showed the Angels laughing: "your article is a book!" This article is based on my book, *Balance from Inside Out*.

No-one, or nothing, is our enemy. Everyone and everything is our teacher. This article is about unveiling the enmity mask by embracing all life experiences, including challenging ones -- thereby reaping the gifts awaiting our recognition.

The root cause of challenges is the perception of separation between us and "other" -- especially God. The root causes of difficult relationships, are our subconscious "Shadow" projections onto "other". The term "Shadow" was coined by Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Jung. The Shadow is an archetype that is part of our psyche, and is comprised of traits in an individual which are repressed in the subconscious mind as socially unacceptable or useless -- often related to primal instincts. The Shadow term was primarily used within same gender interaction. However, Jung recognized that Shadow projections could occur across genders. When unconscious, Shadow traits express themselves in distorted ways. Once befriended, they turn into their higher aspects.

Life is an adventure in unfolding consciousness. Our sense of identity influences our life circumstances: as within, so without. Mystics teach that *all life is one*. Others are mirror reflections of parts of ourselves. In *Aion*, Jung wrote, "If you look outward, you dream. If you look inward, you awaken."

Whenever our ego feels a negative emotion, our Soul calls us to let go of limiting beliefs and become whole. Jung taught that archetypes within our psyche can serve as Inner Guides to help integrate Shadows into our consciousness. The Self is the central archetype. It holds the inner blueprint toward wholeness -- like an acorn has the inherent blueprint to become a tree.

We can better appreciate the role of the Shadow in our lives by drawing from Taoism, whereby the universe is understood as ruled by the interplay of two seemingly opposite forces, i.e., the Yang (or positive, masculine) energy, and the Yin (or negative, feminine) energy. Similarly, each being is ruled by the flow of Yin and Yang energies within. Both energies are essential to contribute to the harmonious way of the middle (Tao).

The Tao is more than the sum of its parts: It represents a balanced synthesis of both forces -- achieved within and around by shifting our awareness from duality to unity consciousness. Similarly, while the unconscious Shadow may seem like an opposing force in our lives, a conscious Shadow becomes an essential complementary force that leads to wholeness and harmony, the Tao. Wholeness comes with balance.

In a challenging interaction, both parties usually need to uncover a compatible Shadow -- Shadow projection tends to be mutual. Both people are brought together through their subconscious minds, which are interconnected in the collective

unconscious. The level of emotions felt is the indicator that one has just encountered his/her Shadow. If only one person feels strong emotions, it is possibly a one-way Shadow projection – although there could be a denial of emotions by the other.

To illustrate how Shadow projection can occur, consider aggressiveness as a woman's unconscious Shadow trait. Its corresponding higher quality is assertiveness, which is sometimes discouraged in girls, while the caring quality is emphasized as acceptable. Aggressiveness can become an unconscious Shadow trait among some adult women. The underlying negative beliefs are "I am powerless/defenseless" and "most people are aggressive." Such a woman might have developed a subconscious, passive-aggressive behavior to have her needs met -- while trying to remain caring. She might even behave too caringly so as to not be perceived as exerting "unacceptable" power.

A woman with this Shadow tends to attract aggressive people, particularly men. A compatible Shadow for such a man, would be his inability to feel and express his caring nature. When unconscious of it, such a man may attract the type of woman described above and perceive her as weak and emotional. The underlying belief for him is "showing that you care is a sign that you are weak or too emotional," and he tends to overdevelop his expression of power, in order to mask his "unacceptable" caring nature.

An encounter between two such individuals is likely to trigger mutually negative emotions, confirming their negative beliefs, until they realize the true purpose of the interaction is mutual Shadow integration. For the woman, it means accepting and uncovering her inner power to co-create her life with assertiveness.

While coming from opposite ends of the spectrum, both parties are to bring the yin trait (caring) into balance with the yang trait (power), so that the resulting synthesized quality of assertiveness can emerge in them as the harmonious "way of the middle," or Tao. We have a choice of either consciously integrating our Shadows, or having our Shadows run our lives -- on their own terms.

There are several effective processes for Shadow Work. The recommended resources below this article offer valuable information and approaches for processing the Shadow, although some do not use this term. The primary tools that have worked for me, are meditation and prayer.

Jung emphasized the luminous quality of the Shadow, as an aspect of the Soul. This understanding implies that a sense of the sacred is to be nurtured when relating to the Shadow, as Jung demonstrated beautifully in "The Red Book." Creating sacred space may be the first step then, upon entering the inner work – as a way to honor the sacred in all life, including ourselves, our Shadows, and the perceived "enemy."

Other essential steps include:

- Identify your Shadow by noticing your negative emotion.

- Own responsibility for your state (without judgment).
- Enter into mindful self-inquiry: "How did I co-create this situation?"; observe who you believe you are in that moment.
- Surrender the ego's perceptions to the Higher Self, or God; offer your relationship with the perceived challenging individual to the Higher Power, and invite Guidance.
- Trust that there is a higher quality to be developed and gifts to be gained.
- Set a clear intention and commitment, such as to know the truth, to become complete, and to allow for a peaceful resolution.
- Observe and feel your emotions without identifying either with being what the story behind them suggests about you, or with being your emotions. Express intense emotions in a harmless way with the intention to heal. This process can open our hearts. If you have unpleasant physical sensations, you may read the above paragraph again and replace the word "emotions" with "physical sensations", and then replace "feeling nature" with "body." In her Yoga Nidra iRest Meditation CD, yoga teacher Adrienne Jamiel invites us to realize: "I am unchanging awareness, noticing perceptions arising, unfolding, and dissolving." Test it out in meditation.
- When seeking to uncover and develop the higher aspect of the Shadow trait, explore merging the Shadow trait seen in the other, with the qualities of compassion, authenticity and integrity. Debbie Ford also asked in *The Shadow Effect* DVD: "When can this trait be useful?". This is how aggressiveness becomes lifted up into assertiveness, to return to our example.
- Choose to shift your awareness, from "I versus other" to "we"; from resistance to acceptance, from judgment to compassion (including toward yourself), from attachment to detachment, from fear to trust. Be willing to forgive and be forgiven.
- Bless the challenging person and relationship. Praying for the "perceived enemy" is healing.
- Give thanks to Life, God, yourself and the "teacher" for this growth opportunity and the gifts it brings.
- When it seems unbelievable that we might hold a Shadow trait similar to that of someone who displays what we perceive as extremely unacceptable behavior, we are to ask ourselves if there could be a more subtle form for expressing this Shadow trait, that might be lurking within. For example, a man who has struck a child violently to stop his uncontrollable mischievous behavior. We might ask: how/when have I ever attempted to control someone else and prevented them from full expression? Sometimes a few words charged with the intention to shut someone down can be a subtle form of oppression.

A few words about the Golden Shadow. It is made of our unconscious yet great qualities, which have been repressed as non valuable early on in life. Examples are:

musicianship, or other artistic talents that were rejected as superficial distractions by adults in a child's life. The Golden Shadow is usually related to beauty, creativity and joy; and appears when we feel envious, jealous, or inferior toward someone we admire for what s/he is or does. Such projections are calls from our Souls to wake up (or *wake in*), to reclaim and nurture the qualities we admire in others.

The Golden Shadow might manifest through the loss of, or separation from, a loved one. Sometimes, "losing" a loved one may serve as a call from the universe for the ones "left behind," to learn to incorporate the qualities they loved in the "lost" one, into their consciousness, so that they become more complete.

Once I heard a Jungian analyst at the Jung Institute share with other classmates like myself, that he suggested to his grieving patients to create an art object, such as a collage, that reminded them of the qualities of the departed loved one. He found that this act helped the griever begin to heal, by feeling the presence in their consciousness of the qualities they missed the most from their loved one.

The gifts gained from Shadow integration may include: humility; acceptance; forgiveness; compassion; feelings of greater wholeness, aliveness, connectedness, peace and joy; the birth of a new quality or skill; feeling closer to our true Self; seeing others' truer Selves; empowerment; confidence; self-worth; expansion of our understanding of perfection; gratitude and awe for the universe's intelligence, for God; and the satisfaction of knowing that we contributed to healing the world -- because we never heal alone, we also heal others around us.

As we become more aware of our personal Shadows, we are to also acknowledge the collective Shadows of the world, stored in the collective unconscious. Collective Shadows are the inner root causes of the global social and environmental crises of the world. Collective Shadows are to be made conscious and integrated, not only in individual inner work, but also and especially in collective inner work.

The difference between a personal Shadow and a collective Shadow lies in the pre-existence of the collective Shadow to any particular person's life. So an individual holds both a personal Shadow and some part of the collective Shadows within. The point is once again to withdraw from blaming or shaming others. Let us embrace that we are all responsible and innocent, and let us act from love.

Collective imbalances between seeming opposite forces are for the most part aspects of the masculine consciousness (doing) in apparent opposition to the feminine consciousness (being, feeling, relating) within and around us. Because the feminine consciousness has been suppressed and undervalued in many societies, balancing our lives today means the renewed appreciation of the feminine types of values and activities in women's and men's lives. Both feminine and masculine types of consciousness are inherent in both women and men. The way in which we relate to nature, our bodies, ourselves, the earth, and others, is to be re-enlivened through a deeper sense of "being and being with." Slowing down helps.

According to Jung, the union of opposites is to be the theme of the age of Aquarius. In my book *Balance from Inside Out*, I offer a possible synthesis of apparently opposing values, such as caring versus detachment, which, when merged harmoniously, become conscious loving.

Just like there is a blueprint within each living being, the living cosmos holds a cosmic blueprint for the evolution of the whole. Some call it "God's Plan." This knowing can help us when setting collective intentions to align with the Cosmic Plan for the collective awakening of all in the One. Chaos may be part of the plan to create higher order. The more consciously we engage in creative change, the less suffering. Gary Zukav offered in his book *Seat of the Soul* that in the Age of Aquarius, we now have a choice of learning love through wisdom, and no longer through suffering.

Collective inner work is a powerful complement to precede all outer work. It can start with affirming the sacredness of all life and invoking the Luminous Presence of the One -- by co-creating sacred space. Circle settings help affirm equality and unity consciousness. Singing sacred songs opens and unifies hearts. The steps described above for personal Shadow integration can be applied to collective inner work in group rituals.

Chief Arvol Looking Horse of the Great Sioux Nation, wrote in "White Buffalo Teachings" that he invites all people from all nations to hold a World Peace and Prayer Day in our own sacred sites, each year on Summer Solstice day (June 21<sup>st</sup>) -- for global healing of all beings and the earth. He added that "the earth is not a resource but the source of life." Native American traditions further teach the importance of mutuality, balance and gratitude in taking from and giving back to the earth.

On the path toward wholeness, we will keep attracting new growth opportunities, thereby uncovering new, or deeper aspects of our Shadows. So let us be easy on ourselves and choose to trust and enjoy our life journey. Paradoxically, mystics reveal that time is an illusion, so we are already complete, perfect and arrived at our destination -- as soon as we align our consciousness from ego to Divinity and step into the Eternal Now. According to Jung, the Soul understands paradoxes: our consciousness is to dance between relative, dualistic reality, and absolute, timeless, nondualistic reality. As Lawrence Boldt put it in his book *Zen and the Art of Making a Living*, we can then discover, "what is meant by 'Follow your bliss' -- do from being. Act in time from the ecstasy of the timeless..." and "...make the world the best place that it can be while loving it exactly as it is."

### **Recommended Resources:**

*A Course in Miracles*. Glen Ellen, CA: Foundation for Inner Peace, 1975.

Danant, Joelle A. *Balance from Inside Out*. Brooklyn, NY: Self-published, 1996.

Ford, Debbie. *The Shadow Effect* (Interactive DVD set). [www.theshadoweffect.com](http://www.theshadoweffect.com), 2009.

Hendricks, Gay PhD., and Kathleen, PhD. Lasting Love. Rodale, 2004.

Johnson, Robert. Ecstasy: Understanding the Psychology of Joy. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row Publishers, 1987.

Jung, Carl. G. "Aion." Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Vol. 9, Part 2. 2nd ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968.

Jung, Carl. G. Man and his Symbols. New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1964.

Jung, Carl.G. Shamdasani, Sonu, Kyburz, Mark, & Peck, John, translators. The Red Book. Philemon Series & W.W. Norton & Co, 2009.

Wilber, Ken; Patten, Terri, Leonard, Adam; and Morelli, Marco. Integral Life Practice. Boston & London: Integral Books, 2008.