

EMBRACING YOUR SHADOW



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HOW TO DANCE WITH YOUR DARK SIDE

Everything Has Two Sides

Everything has two sides, and you can never have one without the other. It's not one side now and the other maybe sometime in the future; they're simultaneous. Don't wait to get old to finally understand this. Awaken to the wisdom of the ages without the aging process. Anything that you perceive as life-threatening or destroying is also life-giving and creating, if you only have the wisdom to look for it. Find that balance in your world and enter into a freedom that few people ever experience, the liberty of an inspiring and trusting life.

At any moment in your life, you will never be put down without being lifted up, nor lifted up without being put down. Positive and negative, good and bad, support and challenge, peace and war - all come together in pairs. They are simultaneous and perfectly balanced, and that is what makes up the divine order of the entire universe. If you ever see one side without the other, you're living in an illusion. Wisdom is the acknowledgement that both sides occur equally and simultaneously (John F Demartini, *The Breakthrough Experience*).

We all feel pain and pleasure. Anytime you think you're feeling more pleasure than pain, you're living an illusion; you're repressing something, and you don't even know it. Or whenever you think, I'm having more pain than pleasure, I'm suffering right now, that's also an illusion. Both emotions are just illusions, lopsided perceptions. They are the masks of tragedy and comedy that veil our true nature. The moment you balance your mind, your perceptions of pain and pleasure disappear, and you experience balance, love and peace.

Libido (the life force) contains two opposite urges or instincts; to live and to die, to go forwards and backwards (death drive) into instinctually/womb/unconsciousness. The libido contains both, or no movement could happen. It is not split; it just flows between the two poles. All energy flows from a difference in potentials. However, the human ego – individually as well as collectively - perennially nurtures the childlike illusion that it can partake only of the positive pole and banishing all that is deemed negative or bad into the unconscious, thus creating an enormously bloated dark or Shadow side in ourselves and in the world (Carl Jung).

What You Resist Will Persist

So much of our religious teachings are rooted in the naively idealistic "Socratic fallacy" that earnestly pursuing the good will eliminate all evil. Many psychologies today likewise skim the surface, treating behaviours, reinforcing ego strategies, and / or medicating - sometimes to good effect.

Yet how is it that there are so many discrepancies between our professed values, our presumptive virtues, and our myriad embarrassing, often destructive, behaviours? It is easy to deny, blame others, project elsewhere, or bury the Shadow complexes in us and just keep on rolling, but in the process, we become most dangerous to ourselves, our families, and to society (James Hollis, *Why Good People Do Bad Things*).

What is not made conscious will indeed continue to haunt our lives. As the twelve-step groups have it, what we resist will persist.

Ego and Shadow

I must confess that I always cringe a bit when yet another client walks into my consulting room and announces with some kind of strange satisfaction or even pride, "I've been to a psychiatrist, and he says I am *bi-polar!*" Well, that is as trite as it would be if a personal trainer told a would-be gym exerciser, "You have two legs!" Of course you're bi-polar - you're human.

Everyone is bi-polar, that is, except maybe if you're autistic. The normal psyche is made up of two poles. The pathology lies not in the existence of the two poles *per se*, but rather in the *degree of separation* between the two poles.

Every person has a *positive ego or ego ideal*. This is the *persona*, the more or less flimsy *mask* or personality with which the ego likes to identify. It is a composite of the survival strategies developed during childhood by way of which our basic needs for acceptance, approval, safety, belonging, autonomy, freedom, etc, were more or less successfully obtained from our caregivers.

That is how we became the little pleaser, achiever, nurturer, competitor, helper, controller, as the case may be. As we grew older, we began to *identify* with these social roles, and as adults, we say, "I can't help it, this is just *who I am*."

When the positive pole of the ego is successful at getting its needs met, we feel happy, secure, nicely poised, successful, perhaps smugly self-satisfied, and even unstoppable, hyper, or invincible - as in manic.

But of course, the idealized persona is only a flimsy and temporary cover-up for its *opposite negative pole or dark side, the Shadow*. That's why we are so stressed and anxious most of the time. That's why our powerful and automatic defence mechanisms are needed.



When the bubble of who I would like to believe I am is in danger of being burst, we rationalize, intellectualize, lash out, explode, counterattack, withdraw, deny, run for the hills, or we **suppress, repress, and project** - play the victim, blame, and see the darkness only in others. It is **they** who are helpless, pathetic, weak, not good enough, unimportant, unlovable, inadequate, lazy, losers, bad, guilty, mean, or evil.

What are Suppression and Repression?

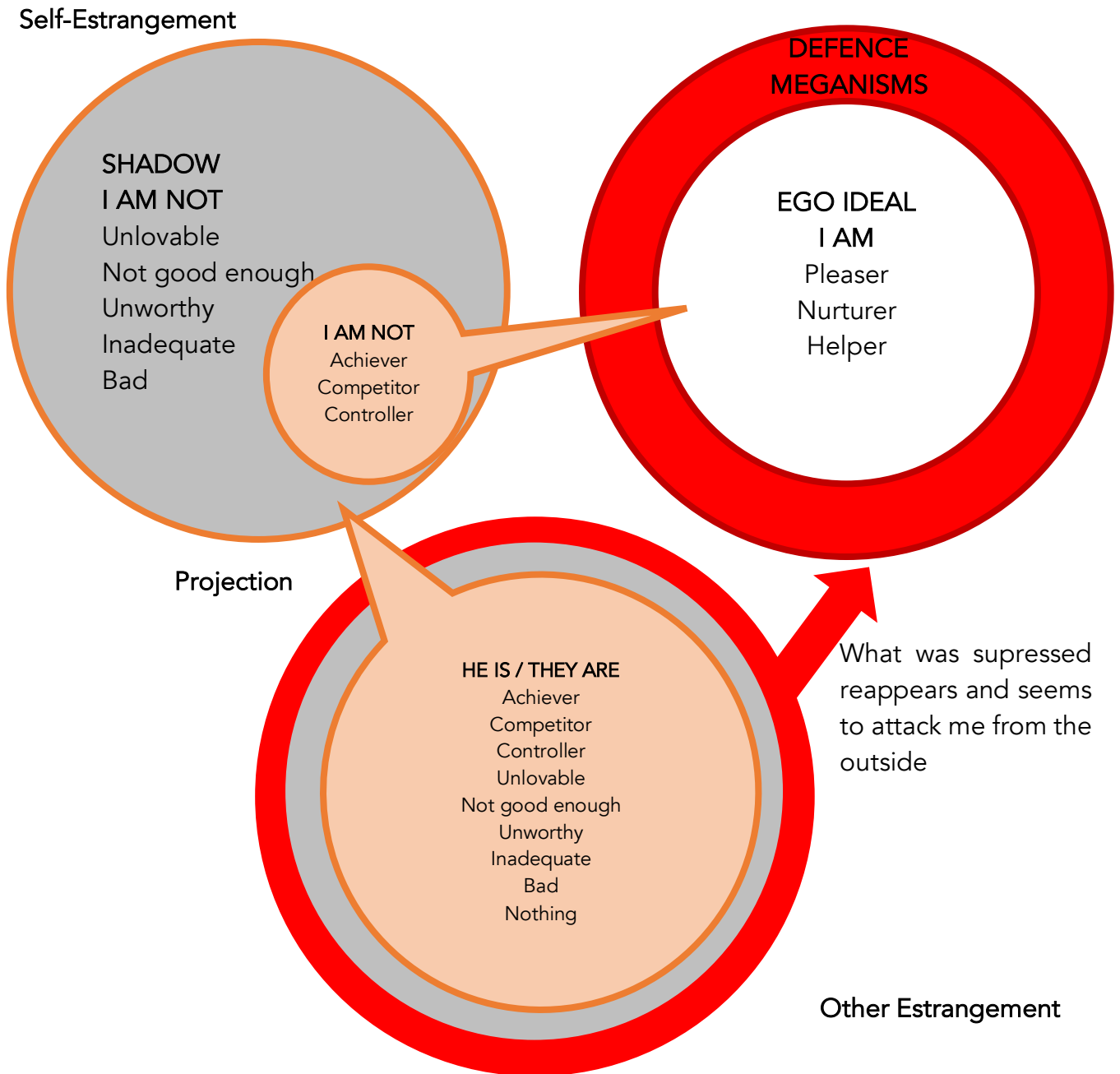
1. **Suppression:** It is a conscious choice not to indulge a particular thought, feeling, or action. "Not to indulge" means that we are *aware* of a thought or feeling, but we *decide* not to dwell on it (internally, by continuing to think about it) - nor to express it (externally, by acting it out). Usually, we suppress because of the impulse's inappropriateness with regard to the situation or because of time constraints in which we "just can't deal with that right now." Suppression is a useful psychological mechanism which permits us to concentrate on our affairs without being distracted by every impulse which arises, and without having to act on those impulses. We acknowledge the impulses, and we accept their presence and the fact that they might emerge again, to be reconciled or suppressed then.
2. **Repression:** It is similar to suppression in that a thought or feeling or emotion is not expressed - but in repression, we *deny* that the element even exists. The repressed element might come into our conscious awareness and then be denied, or it might be prohibited from our awareness at all; it is blocked because it has been judged it to be potentially disruptive to our psychological stability or our self-image. Obviously, both the stability and the self-image are illusory, because they are based on a rejection of the reality of our own thoughts, feelings, and emotions.

What is Projection? Our perceptions of *situations* and other people are distorted. While the repressed material is in the Shadow (unconscious), it projects *onto people* and situations; for example, fear which has been repressed and then projected will *colour our perceptions* of the world as a frightening place. Because we are not perceiving accurately, we acquire incorrect information from our surroundings, and thus we respond inappropriately; we react fearfully to situations which are not truly dangerous. Repression distorts not only our observations in this moment, but also our memories of the past and our expectations for the future.

Harmful Effects of Repression and Projection

- **Repression consumes energy.** The effort to keep material in the unconscious mind is like the effort to keep a buoyant object underwater; we are using energy to hold back the energy of the repressed elements. When repressed material is released, we might experience a feeling of lightness and freedom - and power, because the energy from the material and from our effort to repress it is now available for a constructive use.
- **Repression causes emotional numbness.** We repress by intellectually denying the reality of the emotion, and by desensitizing ourselves to our awareness of the movement and pressure of the emotional energy within us. The extent to which we repress one emotion or sensation is the extent to which we repress all emotions or sensations; for example, when we refuse to feel fear and anger, we also lose our capacity to feel happiness and pleasure.
- **The repressed material does not develop.** For instance, if we repress our anger, we do not learn how to express it properly, because we are denying ourselves the opportunities to practice the various ways in which the dynamics of anger can be used in an effective, civilized manner. Because we have not developed these skills, the anger - when it finally bursts out of its repression - has an immature nature, as in a "temper tantrum."
- **The contents regress.** Not only do they not develop, they proceed in the opposite direction, becoming more primitive and unfocused. Anger degenerates into a general, vague hostility.
- **The contents become autonomous.** They seem to create "a life of their own." Because the ego has denied its connection to them, it has no control over them, so they arise at inappropriate moments, and in inappropriate ways, often driving us into compulsive behaviour; in that sense, they control us. As the ego makes plans and designs its life, the repressed contents seem to develop agendas of their own, as though plotting a way to express themselves - but their expression will necessarily be contrary to our will, as though an alien force is imposing itself upon us.

- **The contents are projected more intensely.** When we see people through a thicker projection, our perceptions of them become more distorted.
- **The contents can cause a reversal in our behaviour.** Jung used the term "enantiodromia" to label the inclination of people to go from one extreme to the other, as when a seemingly sweet, harmless person suddenly indulges a violent rampage.



The more limited and rigidly defended the ego becomes, the more attributes are judged to be “not me”, and the more bloated the Shadow will become. Even much needed and perfectly “good” attributes get shoved into the Shadow, thus creating the *Light or Golden Shadow*.

When others are judged, our own Dark Shadow is projected onto them. When we fall in love, our own Golden Shadow is projected onto them. As the romantic relationship deteriorates into disillusionment, the Golden Shadow is overshadowed by the really Dark Shadow, and that becomes all that we see in our partner.

Energy Seeks an Outlet

Water, under suppressive / repressive pressure, does not go away; it seeks its outlet and will attack the weakest point in the container. All violations of our nature ultimately go underground and reappear as symptoms - behavioural, physical, intra-psychic, relational – for what is denied consciously will only hide for a while and then break through again into our world.

A woman once told me that she doesn't see the need to delve into her past or her dark side, because “I had a very happy childhood, and I'm a very happy person. I've always been a happy, positive person. I asked her, “And are there people around you who are sad?” She said, “Well, I always try to cheer them up.” She couldn't stand to see sadness in others because she was suppressing her own sadness. In the rest of our session together she told me how sick she had been for the past few years. She had kidney, lung, and stomach problems. Her negativity went into her body and manifested as illness, and she hadn't realized the price she was paying for her so-called constant happiness.

So often what is shadowy in our psychic life is projected onto others, whomever we can blame, denigrate, attack, or accuse of precisely those motives that we have denied. It is a stunning revelation to come to the recognition that what I find wrong in the Other may also be found in me, and that I may even have chosen this “Other” in order to enact a Shadowy *pas de deux*. How else can we explain why so many women who see themselves as loving, caring, and gentle, marry men who they see as the exact opposite of themselves?

What is Wrong in the World is in Myself

How often do we ask ourselves the confrontative question: “Of what am I unconscious here?” Of course, the problem with the unconscious is that it is unconscious. There is a self-aggrandizing tendency of our ego to dissociate those contents that are Shadow material, hence such self-knowledge usually comes to us the hard way. In the meantime, it is much easier to blame someone else.

As Carl Jung noted in a 1937 lecture at Yale University:

We are still certain we know what other people think or what their true character is. We are convinced that certain people have all the bad qualities we do not know in ourselves. We must be exceedingly careful not to project our own shadows shamelessly. If you can imagine someone brave enough to withdraw these projections, then you get an individual conscious of a pretty thick shadow.... He has become a serious problem to himself, as he is now unable to say that they do this or that, that they are wrong, and they must be fought.... Such a person knows that whatever is wrong in the world is in himself, and if he only learns to deal with his own shadow, then he has done something real for the world. He has succeeded in removing an infinitesimal part of the unsolved gigantic problems of our day.

True Love is a Balance of Opposites

The universal law of balance also pertains to love, although this is exactly where we would most like to delude ourselves that it is all going to be only moonlight, gondolas and roses. Conventional wisdom believes that love is only the nice, positive, and supportive side of the equation, but the synthesis of the halves is a vastly more powerful thing. Have you noticed that when you are manic and up, your partner will help bring you back to equilibrium by bursting your bubble? If you are down and depressed, your partner will try to lift you up. If you become cocky, your partner will bring you down. If you become deflated, they will help you up. That is how true love works.

When you are in the state of true love, you see the balance all around you. The moment you realize this balance within and all around you, you become liberated. To be in the state of love, or enlightenment, you need to equilibrate your perceptions and emotions. This does not mean indifference or apathy - equilibrium refers to the point of inner balance and poise that goes beyond emotional extremes.

Love, like everything else, is made up of two sides: support and challenge. We're required to experience both sides equally and live in this world of duality until we can see the magnificence of their underlying balance. Were you aware that supporting someone can make them weak and dependent, and that challenging them can make them strong and independent?

You wouldn't believe how many times I've seen a child being challenged by the father, while the mother was supportive, and vice versa. The underlying balance of love is evident when you observe that the gentler and more lenient one parent is, the rougher and stricter the other becomes. The softer the one is, the harder the other gets, and the two together make up the balance of love.

If you pause a minute, you may notice that this is true of how the world works - there is always a balance between support and challenge in your life. It's as if the universe itself maintains a balance between "motherly" and "fatherly" love.

Support and Challenge

A child requires both support and challenge. If there is no balance between the ways in which the parents provide love, a brother or sister will balance it out, or the kid down the street will beat them up, or a teacher will make their life difficult. You can't escape the balance of praise and reprimand. If you had nothing but challenge right from birth, you wouldn't survive your family. If you had nothing but support from your family, you wouldn't survive when you went out into the world.

One of the greatest illusions people fall into is the search for pleasure without pain, praise without reprimand, or nice without mean. Looking for elusive, one-sided events in a two-sided universe is the root of people's suffering. When you embrace the balance and the truth, love surrounds you. John F Demartini defines love as "the synthesis or perfect blending of all dualistic perceptions, the summation of all polarities.... It takes both positive and negative particles in perfect synthesis to create light, and in exactly the same way, you need both sides of every event to hone you in on your true nature, which is also light."

The Perfection of Two Sides

A coin has two sides, heads and tails. You may think of self-worth in terms of how many coins you accumulate in your life. If you allow yourself to embrace only the positive heads side, then the second somebody tries to give you a coin (an experience) that builds your self-worth, you say, "I don't want half of that." When you want only the positive and keep pushing away the negative, you can't get the coin. Most of us spend our lives trying to run from rejection, reprimand, and criticism, instead of embracing both praise and blame in the pursuit of fulfilling our purpose of becoming whole human beings.

I'm amazed by the number of people I meet every week who believe they will one day get to perfection, instead of acknowledging that they already are perfection. They live under the illusion that they weren't perfect in some situation, that if they had acted differently, they would have been. They don't see that the duality is the perfection, and the combination of the two sides serves to put us right into our hearts.

Both Sides Now

Personas (personality parts) are the *masks* that conceal our *true nature*. How are personas formed? Every time you lie about the universe, you simultaneously create two of them – the *self-righteous* and the *self-wrongous* mask.

If you have 1,000 lies about divine order and balance, you have 2,000 personas, and all those aspects of yourself compete for your consciousness, lower your potential, and keep you from remembering who you really are.

When you think you're *more positive than negative*, you get self-righteous and build yourself up, and when you see *more negatives than positives*, you get self-wrongous and beat yourself down. When you're up, you feel elated and act self-righteously and superior toward other people; and when you're down, you feel depressed and act self-wrongeously and inferior.

Have you ever found yourself in some situation of conflict, and thought, *I can't believe I'm saying this?* That's a persona temporarily taking over in a moment of stress. Every time a voice says, "Who do you think you are? You can't do that. You don't belong here," just know that one of your personas is frightened by your dreams because it doesn't have the power to fulfil them, but *the whole integrated you* does.

Everybody has two sides. If you're honest, you'll see that you're both saint and sinner, vicious and virtuous. So, when someone accuses you of something, don't waste time defending yourself. Instead, admit that you are in fact the possessor of whatever it is they are attacking you for. Not only are *you* the possessor, but *they* are, too, and they are judging themselves; that's why they are accusing you. If it hurts to hear it, that means you haven't seen how that quality serves you or others and you're judging yourself. Their gift to you is to *wake you up to another part of yourself that you haven't yet loved.*

The World is a Mirror

People treat you exactly the way you unconsciously treat yourself. Their outer mannerisms toward you reflect your inner mannerisms, so one of the most powerful ways to transform your life is to become consciously aware of your beliefs and feelings about yourself. Most people go through life completely oblivious. They have high moments and low moments and swing through their emotions, but they don't see the balanced order. Your relationships with others are simply mirrors of your relationship with yourself. *Anything that you have loved in yourself you can embrace in the world.*

Each of us lives in duality; we are all bi-polar people. We have a part that lifts us up and another part that puts us down. We praise and criticize ourselves. Nobody will ever put us down as much as we do - because no one will ever think as much or as intensely about us as we think about ourselves! When somebody reacts to us, they are merely reflecting repressed part of us. No one ever victimizes us; they just **reflect us.**

Words of Wisdom and Power

I am a human being.
I have every trait in perfect balance, and they all serve.
Whatever I see is me.
Whatever appears, I look for the other side and I am free.
I take no credit and I take no blame.
This, too, is a lesson in love.

Every Person Has Every Trait

There are more than 4,000 human traits, and everybody has them in their own unique form, so don't imagine that there is any one of them that you haven't got. All you have to do is look. In fact, every human being has every human characteristic, as well as its opposite. Don't bother questioning whether you have this or that trait that you see in someone else, because you do. It's not a matter of if you have it, but only where, when, and who has seen it. All qualities are apparent to someone.

You never gain or lose anything that is part of you; you only change the forms in which it is expressed. Your hierarchy of values determines how your attributes are expressed. Everyone is your reflection; The seer, the seeing, and the seen are the same. In less lofty terms, if you spot it in them, you've got it in you.

Every Trait Has Two Sides

Everything has two sides, a benefit and a drawback; nothing is one-sided. People often ask, "*But can I really be too caring, or unselfish?*" Indeed, you can spoil and disempower others by being too caring and also neglect yourself by being too unselfish! "*Can it be good to be selfish and materialistic?*" Indeed, you can nudge others towards independence by being selfish for a change, and you can create employment, as well as financially support others by valuing money and material things.

Every trait is neutral until someone judges whether or not it's beneficial, according to his or her hierarchy of values. When we disapprove of others, we tend to project our belief systems into their lives and try to change them to be more like us.

Self-Deception

One of the more disturbing human capabilities is the ability to deceive ourselves. For example, the Nazis somehow convinced themselves that extermination of Jewish people was best for their victims and for the world. I have repeatedly been amazed by the way people live in denial of damaging and hurtful behaviour. Alcoholics, drug addicts, sex offenders, abusive husbands (and wives!) - all are masters of self-deception and believers of their own lies.

"Self-deception is a shadowy phenomenon by which we pull the wool over some part of our own psyche. We put a move on ourselves. We deny, suppress, or minimize what we know to be true. We assert, adorn, and elevate what we know to be false. We prettify ugly realities and sell ourselves the prettified versions. We become our own dupes, playing the role of both perpetrator and victim. We know the truth, and yet we do not know it, because we persuade ourselves of its opposite" (Cornelius Plantinga, *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be*).

Self-deception can be expressed in many ways, some less harmful than others. If I convince myself that I am a great cook or believe that I have a better golf game than my stats reveal, it is not as perilous as the alcoholic who doesn't believe he has a drinking problem or the gambler who refuses to admit he is addicted. We all have blind spots, but when inaccurate self-perception hurts others, we really need to be called back to reality.

The problem with the unconscious is, of course, that it is unconscious. The willingness to track its manifestations in our biographical patterns and in our dreams, life is quite demanding, and many people will not make the effort. So, the sub-rosa work of their unconscious Shadow continues (James Hollis, *Why Good People Do Bad Things*).

The Dark Shadow and the Golden Shadow

The shadow self is a person *we would not rather be*. It is the things we see in other people that push our buttons, that make us angry and make us say things we regret. "I am not a bad person," you say. "I would never do that," you say. This is our personal dark side. We are not born this way.

Every family has their particular dark side shadows that were not allowed to be manifested. As children we are told, *don't be like that, don't be angry, don't be selfish, don't be a liar, don't be mean*. What we do not understand is that when we are very young, we begin to suppress and eventually repress these aspects of ourselves. By the age of twenty-five, most people have wrapped themselves up in a persona, so that they no longer know who they really are because so many aspects of ourselves as a whole human being are unacceptable to society, and to ourselves. This is our *Dark Shadow*.

But along with the potentially harmful traits that got repressed, usually a whole bunch of other wonderful potentialities also fell by the wayside as we grew up. Maybe your parents told you that you should not be so loud, so you hide your voice. Maybe they told you not to be creative and artsy because people will tell you that you are stupid or ridiculous, so you hid your creative instincts. The positive traits that got disowned in the process of growing up are not lost, they just got stored away in the unconscious as the Light part of your Shadow, also called the *Golden Shadow*.

“Sugar and Spice and All Things Nice”

Many *little girls* were brought up to deny not only their aggression and their selfishness, but also the positive sides of these traits, that is their independence, their ambition, including their intelligence, their competence, and their power, to make sure that they are sweet and nice enough to be taken care of. How this plays out in such a girl's adult life, is that she will recognize her Golden Shadow - her disowned independence, ambition, brilliance, competence, and power - in a man she meets, and fall in love with him. She does not consciously realize that she is actually falling in love with these disowned parts of herself. She says that this man completes her, that he is her other half, but does not realize that she is projecting her own lost wholeness onto him.

However, as soon as the first flush of romance wears off, she will be confronted with the dark side of these traits in her partner - and she will begin to see his aggression and his selfishness. The next phase in the relationship is the *power struggle*, where she tries to suppress and repress those traits in him - using the very same tactics that her parents used to suppress and repress those traits in her when she was little. She scolds, disapproves, criticized, judges, reprimands, and rejects, using shame and guilt in a relentless attempt to repress the traits in him that are repressed in herself.

The opposite and complementary process happened in the life of such a woman's husband. As a *little boy*, he was taught to suppress and repress his tender and powerful emotions, his fearfulness and his helplessness, so that he would grow up to be ambitious and competent enough to take care of himself and others. In the process, his tenderness, his vulnerability, and much of his ability to feel his own feelings and to empathize with others, also got lost.

Inevitably, he will fall in love with these traits as expressed in some woman. When the rose-tinted spectacles of in-loveness and infatuation are no longer in place, he will then resist, judge, and try to repress these “over-emotional and needy” qualities in his partner, probably using the very same strategies that were used on him as a child - he may ignore, ridicule, reprimand, or bully his partner for expressing the very same traits that were (and are still being) repressed in himself.

Opposites Attract

You may now be starting to see that *you have no real opposite*. You may have *disowned* parts of yourself, which you'll decide to *date, marry, or even parent*. But make no mistake: All parts are there inside you, whether you acknowledge them or not.

It seems as if opposites attract because you don't see yourself in someone else right away. You get infatuated with parts of them that you think are special and theirs alone, and you can't see that you have them, too. When you do this, you unconsciously filter out anything that goes against your values and exaggerate whatever you consider more supportive or positive.

The Pedestal of Infatuation and the Pit of Resentment

When you first engage in a relationship with someone, you tend to put that individual up on a pedestal and *minimize* yourself. You feel as if you can't live without him or her, and you want to hurry up and be together. You're *addicted* to the person. That is conditional infatuation, *not love*. When the person doesn't live up to your fantasy, you realize you've been gullible; and you get angry because you were foolish enough to project your values and therefore unrealistic expectations onto him or her. You get resentful and you say, we don't have a thing *in common*. *We just don't have the same goals. Now you notice all the differences while becoming blind to the similarities*, and you start punishing the other person.

Anybody whom you praise, you'll also eventually reprimand. If you elevate someone on a pedestal, you'll also eventually banish that person into a pit with resentment. It would be wiser to put people into *your heart* instead. Nobody deserves the pedestal or the pit, and everybody is worth caring for. Yes, everybody!

Words of Wisdom and Power

When I see both sides, I experience the heart of love.

Those I unwisely believe to irritate me actually teach me about myself.

My shadow self is part of my perfection.

I expect other people to live according to their values, not mine.

When I love others as they are, they become what I love.

I reclaim my disowned parts so that I can move forward with balanced perceptions and affection.

Infatuation is blind to the negatives, and resentment is blind to the positives.

I choose true love in order to see both sides equally.

Every Irritation is an Opportunity to Own a Disowned Part

Later on in a relationship that started out with infatuation, when friction starts to develop because of perceived differences, you again deny that what bugs you, turns you off, and drives you crazy *also resides in you in equal measure but in a different form*. When your partner begins to challenge you, you may think, I don't want to be in this relationship! That's because your unawakened self, the part of you living in the fantasy of having pleasure without pain, positive without negative, is attracted to whatever you think is similar to you or what you believe supports your highest values.

When someone starts to irritate you, that's your opportunity, again, to look inside and find that very same trait in yourself - and discover that you have it in equal measure. This is *claiming your disowned parts*, and it's when you can experience a personal growth spurt in your relationship. Indeed, the universe is designed to assure your growth, so you attract and are drawn to people who appear to be you opposite.

Infatuation is an exaggeration of positives and similarities. Resentment is an exaggeration of negatives and differences. *Love is equally embracing both.*

The Purpose of Marriage

The purpose of marriage is *to teach people how to fully love themselves, their owned and disowned parts*. Many people still live with the illusion that the purpose of marriage is *happiness*. This fantasy began in the 12th century when the troubadours created romantic love. Marriage is not about happiness, unless you redefine the term happiness as *fulfilment*, which is the *synthesis of both positive and negative emotion*. Marriage was never intended to be one-sided. In the marriage vows, we pledge to love for richer and poorer, in sickness and health, for better or for worse.

Love is the perfect equilibrium of pain and pleasure, support and challenge, nice and mean, pleasant and unpleasant, like and dislike. In any relationship except in moments of presence and unconditional love, you'll oscillate between liking and disliking the person as you fluctuate around the centre point of love.

You Attract What You Disown in Yourself

As John F Demartini says, "You are a full quantum being, but in your mind, you can be fooled and deny or disown half of yourself. When you imagine that you have more positive than negative traits, you disown half of your experience, and the negativity becomes your disowned part. Ironically, whatever you disown in yourself you attract *into* your life in some form or another. You marry your disowned parts, become business partners with them, and attract them as clients and friends. *Whatever you don't want to see or appreciate in yourself, you keep attracting into your life until you learn to love it.* You can't escape your full quantum."

The Law of Spit

Collect a little saliva in your mouth, then put it in your hand and hold it away from yourself. Wave it around a little until it cools, and then put it back in your mouth. How does it feel? Pretty revolting?

The farther away in space and time the spit goes from your body, the less you're attracted to it. In fact, it almost approximates someone else's spit. Why? Because you have a psychological boundary that thinks anything *outside* you is not as good as anything *inside* you. Your illusion that you are *separate from the world* is the basis of the myth of separateness, self versus other, good versus evil. Interesting?

Never Say Never

When you hear people say, "I would never do that," you can write it down and put it in a sealed envelope and say, "Don't open this for six months." Life is like a big play, and whatever role we most resist is the one we get to act in next. We draw in those things we fear, judge, and resist, to teach us to love ourselves and the world. We're not here to judge or be positive or negative thinkers; we're here to be the love that embraces both sides.

"Our deepest fears are like dragons, guarding our deepest treasure." (Rainer Maria Rilke)

When your Buttons are Pushed

There are no victims in this world. We are all the cause and creators of our own perceptual experience. Until we acknowledge this fundamental truth, no true healing transformation or awakening can take place.

The next time somebody does or says something that really pushes your buttons, instead of immediately reacting, stop! Give yourself one minute to consider, and think, *How do I do that, either identically or in my own form? How does it serve others that I behave in this way? How does it serve me that they're doing it now? What part did I play in making sure this happened?*

You'll probably be unable to think clearly in the heat of the moment, but that's OK. Pausing for even a moment between trigger and response is progress. Go over the encounter in your mind later when you're alone and find the *hidden mirror*.

Two people start out in a relationship with masks on, afraid they won't be loved for being themselves. But if you know that *no matter what you've done, you're worthy of love*, and if you see that *everything you've done has served a purpose*, then you're not afraid to take off the mask. You may not even wear one in the first place.

Everyone outside of you is a reflection and a part of you. Love yourself enough to love them. So many people put on facades and masks to convince themselves that they don't love the people they love, but I don't buy that for a second. The truth is, there is nothing but love, and all else is illusion. The power to transform your life is in your heart. You only need the courage to open it.

Would You Rather be Whole or be Good?

When our Shadow remains unexamined, it is almost inevitable that we will be hurt over and over again without knowing why. Before placing our trust in others, we first have to trust ourselves. And if we don't understand our own Shadow side, we won't truly know ourselves. And neither will we be prepared to handle the truth of the Shadow in other people.

Each of us has parts we repress, disdain or refuse to accept and Love about ourselves. Jung asked a great question, "*Would you rather be whole or be good?*" Working on the Shadow is about becoming whole, even wholesome, by discovering and transcending the dark side of the ego personality.

Try to identify some of your own 'bad, naughty, petulant' parts this month. It's not easy to love All That Is, in others and yourself, but doing this kind of work can transform faults and weaknesses into gifts and strengths. Facing your own Shadow takes courage and dedication but the rewards are so precious, it's worth it.

Robert Bly calls the Shadow that 'long bag we drag behind us'. His *Little Book on the Human Shadow* is a great resource for men in particular. Linda S. Leonard is a good resource for female Shadow work. Her book *The Wounded Woman* ought to be required reading for every successful, professional woman who reaches that dark, low point, when comprehending the psychological cost of 'making it' in a male dominated society can save her life, literally. Both sexes ought to read about each other's Shadows, for we tend to project upon the other what we don't want to deal with. A fine book for couples would be *Romancing the Shadow*, a collaboration between psychologists Connie Zweig and Steven Wolf.

Those times we feel drained, depressed and unappreciated are often signals that we need to come to terms with some aspect of our Shadow selves. Dragging heavy, unexamined parts around can weigh you down and sap your spirit. Dealing with this 'excess baggage,' will give you more energy.

Finding Your True Power

There's a saying, '*Our greatest Power comes from our deepest wound.*' Facing your Shadow may be the secret to finding your true power in life. This universal truth is simply and beautifully told in the fairy tale about the princess who eventually persuaded herself to kiss the repulsive frog, who then turned into the handsome prince.

The movie *Black Swan* is a story about Shadow and though obviously exaggerated, is psychologically true in that it shows how destructive the Shadow can be if not integrated into the personality. The young woman in the story lands the roles of both the white swan and the black one in the ballet, *Swan Lake*, which itself is an archetypal story about light and shadow.

Nina only identifies with her "white swan." She is innocent and sweet, and also perfectionistic. As she is split off from her sexuality, power, and aggression, she can only see these qualities outside herself, in this case, in the character of Lily. Though she begins to integrate them, she maintains her quest for absolute perfection (rather than completion/ wholeness) and self-destructs.

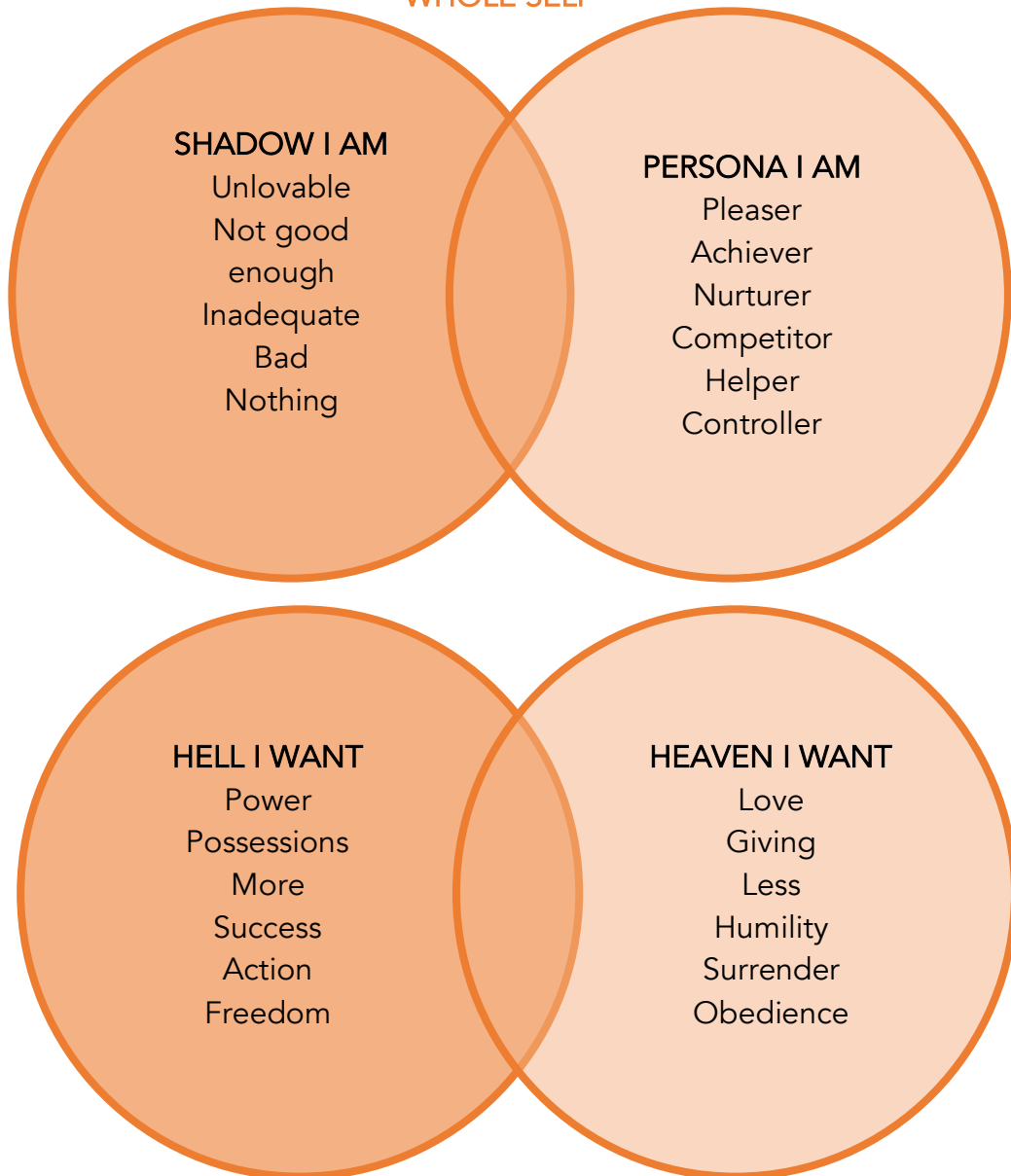
Contradiction versus Paradox

The defensive manoeuvres of denial, repression, and projection will only last that long, until we fall into the dark hole of our own unlovableness and badness - as in depression. As Simon and Garfunkel used to sing, "Hello, darkness, my old friend, I've come to meet with you again." When the equal and opposite negative pole is stripped of its illusions and its defences, the Shadow is fully revealed, and we are sucked into the bottomless pit of darkness and depression.

Robert Johnson (*Owning Your Own Shadow*) says that contradiction brings the crushing burden of meaninglessness. Contradiction is barren and destructive, yet *paradox* is creative. It is a powerful embracing of reality. Every human experience can be expressed in terms of paradox. The electric plug in the wall has two prongs, access to a positive and negative electrical charge. From this opposition comes the usefulness of the electric current. Day is comprehensible only in contrast to night. The same applies to *masculinity - femininity; activity - rest; up - down; I - you; joy - sadness.... The way out of the dilemma of bipolarity is to embrace the contradictions within ourselves, each other, and the world.*

For some incomprehensible reason we often refuse this paradoxical nature of reality, and in an idiot moment, think we can function outside it. The very moment we do this, we translate *paradox* into *opposition*. Personal suffering begins when we are crucified between these opposites. If we try to embrace one without paying tribute to the other, we degrade paradox into contradiction. Yet both pairs of opposites must be *equally honoured*. This is especially true in the case of the opposition between the Shadow and the persona, evil and good, heaven and hell.

WHOLE SELF



Right or Wrong?

Our error is that we use the word *religious* in a wrong way. Religion comes from Latin *re*, meaning again, and *ligare*, meaning to bind, bond, or bridge. Religion means to *bind together again*. It can never be affixed to one of a pair of opposites. There is no such thing as right / wrong, sacred / profane. There can only be a *religious insight that bridges or heals*. This is what restores and reconciles the opposites that have been torturing each of us.

A *mandorla* is that almond-shaped segment that is made when two circles partly overlap. It signifies the overlap of opposites, for example the overlap of heaven and earth. There is not one of us who is not torn by the competing demands of heaven and earth; the mandorla instructs us how to engage in reconciliation. Christ and the Virgin are often portrayed within the framework of the mandorla. This reminds us that we partake of the nature of both heaven and earth.

The True Meaning of Religion

The religious faculty is the art of taking the opposites and binding them back together again, surmounting the split that has caused so much suffering. This helps us move from contradiction - that painful condition where things oppose each other - to the realm of paradox, where we are able to *entertain simultaneously two contradictory notions and give them equal dignity*. Then, and only then, is there the possibility of grace, the spiritual experience of contradictions brought into a coherent whole, giving us a unity greater than either one of them.

We must restore the word *religious to its true meaning*; then it will regain its healing power. To heal, to bond, to join, to bridge, to put back together again - these are our sacred faculties. Most people spend their life energy supporting the warfare within themselves. To engage in opposition is to be ground to bits by the insolubility of life's problems and events. To transfer the energy of opposition to paradox is a very large leap in evolution towards maturity and stability.

"If thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be filled by light" (Matt. 6:22). The right eye sees this, the left eye sees that; but if one comes to the third eye, the single eye, all will be filled with light. Indian people put a spot of rouge in the centre of the forehead to indicate that they are (trying to be) enlightened. In the system of chakras that is the highest point attainable by human consciousness. One more chakra, the seventh, exists, but that is beyond our ordinary ability to experience.

South American *curanderos* (healers) divide their altar into three sections. The right is made up of inspiring elements such as a statue of a saint, flowers, a magic talisman; the left contains very dark and forbidding elements such as weapons, knives, or other instruments of destruction. *The space between these two opposing elements is a place of healing*. Our own healing proceeds from that overlap of what we call good and evil, light and dark. It is not the light element alone that does the healing; the place where the light and dark begin to touch is where miracles arise.

Reconciliation of Opposites

The old symbol for Christ - the two lines indicating a stylized fish - is a mandorla. By definition, Christ himself is the intersection of the divine and the human. He is the prototype for the reconciliation of opposites and our guide out of the realm of conflict and duality. Courtship and marriage are a universal and powerful symbol for our reconciliation with the spirit. Sex is the one symbol in dreams that is always creative. It is speaking to us of reconciliation and creation.

In alchemy one goes through four stages of development: the *nigredo*, in which one experiences the darkness and depression of life; the *albedo*, in which one sees the brightness of things; the *rubedo*, where one discovers passion; and finally, the *citrino*, where one appreciates the goldenness of life. After all this comes a full-colour mandorla. This is the *pavanis*, the peacock's tail that contains all the preceding hues. One cannot stop this process until one has brought it to the *pavanis*, that concert of colours that contains everything.

All things bright and beautiful...

*All things dull and ugly
All creatures short and squat
All things rude and nasty...
All things sick and cancerous
All evil things great and small,
All things foul and dangerous...
All things scabbed and ulcerous
All pox both great and small
Putrid, foul and gangrenous
The Lord God made them all.*

Monty Python

Exercise: The Quantum Collapse Process

The Quantum Collapse Process devised by John F Demartini is a powerful tool for dissolving illusions, centring the mind, opening the heart, and awakening balanced vision. The purpose of this exercise is to *balance out the lopsided perceptions* that have been running your life, health, wealth, relationships, and self-worth, and free up your potential and inspired inner voice.

The word *Collapse* here does not mean to fall apart or lose strength. The idea is to *Collapse your false beliefs and illusions about yourself, others, and life*. When your false nature collapses, your true nature is revealed, and it is magnificent.

The earlier someone appeared in your life, the closer they were to you, and the greater their effect on you - the more profound the domino effect will be after Collapsing them. If you have strong emotional charges and early associations with someone, they will affect everything downstream from that moment in time. For this reason, it's usually most powerful to begin with a parent.

Whether you choose a friend, a lover, a marriage or a business partner, it's ultimately going to be you reflected off somebody anyway. There are things that your persona won't let you see, but if you deal with their reflections in others, you'll see them in yourself more easily. Every Collapse is really a *self-collapse* at heart, because *whatever you see out there is you*.

Remember that *every person has every trait*. All of your traits are conserved through time and space, so you never gain or lose a trait; you only change the *form of its expression*.

The purpose of the process is to *own your positive and negative disowned parts*. You are going to work with your *Golden Shadow* and your *Dark Shadow*, in other words your *positive qualities* that you project onto those people that you are infatuated with, and your *negative qualities* that you project onto those people that you resent, despise or dislike.

If you have difficulty thinking of who sees some positive quality in you, that means that you're *self-wrongous* and *minimizing* and beating yourself up in relation to them. If you have trouble seeing where you have the same negative quality as someone you don't like, it means that you're *self-righteous* and *exaggerating* yourself by building yourself up in relation to them. Both the beating up and the building up *create walls* between you and your person, and between you and the truth. You've got every human trait, it's just in a different form that keeps you from recognizing yourself in others.

Don't move on from any Column in the following exercises before you're absolutely clear that you have the same quality to the *same degree* as the person you're working with. If you still think they have that quality *more than you*, keep looking. I promise you, it's not a matter of *if*, it's only a matter of *where* you have that quality.

When positives outweigh the negatives, you become emotionally attracted and infatuated (addicted). When positives don't equal negatives, you lie. Lies are imbalances. *When positives equal negatives*, you become grateful and unconditionally loving. *The truth is balance!*

There's no such thing as somebody who is too hard to work with; there's just somebody who reminds you of what is hard to own or face about yourself. Sometimes it seems too much to face about yourself, but this is a great opportunity to do just that.

Owning Your Positive Disowned Parts: Your Golden Shadow

Remember, every person has every trait. To re-own your disowned *positive parts*, think of a person that you *love and admire*. Consider these questions when you begin with Column 1 of the next exercise:

Who is the person that you love and admire most your life?
Who has the power to make you happy?
Who would you most like to be around?
Who do you desire or adore most?
Who do you idealize most or who are you infatuated with most?
Who are you completely in love with?
Who makes you whole?
Who affirmed, supported, or made you feel special?
Who are you having difficulty loving less or getting out of your mind?
Who do you perceive as being essential to your happiness?

Now go to Column 1 on the next page and write down all the *most positive and admirable traits about that person*, for example, "Gave me gifts" or "Considerate." Continue listing the person's positive traits, writing only one trait in each of the rectangular boxes provided. Consider these questions as you look for positive traits:

What human trait do you most like, admire, or consider positive or attractive about this person?
What is it about this person that makes them likable?
What has this person done or not done that feels so good?
What is it about this person that makes you seek and admire them?
Why can't you be away from them?
Why is it you want to be with them or want to see them again?
Why are you so attracted to them?
Why do you desire them so much?
What have they done or not done that you think you haven't or have?

Think in terms of chronology: What have they done or not done (*past*), are they doing or not doing (*present*), will they do or not do (*future imagined*), that was, is, or will be pleasurable? Also think in terms of all the categories or areas of life: *spiritual, mental, vocational, financial, familial, social, and physical*.

Now go to Column 2 and write down the initials of all the *people who have seen you as having the same positive trait* that you have written in Column 1. Think of all the people that you know who have perceived you as considerate at some point - *past, present, or future*, keep writing until you can see that you have the trait in Column 1 *to the same degree* as the person in question, although it may be similar or different forms.

Don't just say "everybody," that's an illusion. Be specific. If you think you don't have this trait, that's your illusion, so just keep thinking and writing until you can see that you do.

Now go to Column 3 and write down *how it is a drawback to you* that this person has that positive trait. Remember that whenever somebody is lifting you up, somebody else is putting you down; when someone attaches to you, someone else is withdrawing from you; when somebody praises you, somebody else criticizes you; when someone is being generous to you, someone else is being stingy. *Keep the opposites in mind.*

Think of all the ways this positive trait has been a disservice or drawback to you and keep writing until you *dissolve all the infatuation or idealization* towards that trait. For example, how is this person's "Considerate" trait a drawback or disservice to you? Did it make you feel guilty or like you had to give up some of your time for them? Did it make you feel obligated, dependent, or pressured? Was their attention a distraction to you? Keep writing until you dissolve any admiration or infatuation toward that trait. Don't stop until you see that the *benefits and drawbacks are perfectly balanced*, and this trait no longer runs you.

Now go to Column 4 and ask how your having that quality has been a *disservice to others*. Some of the benefits will be the same as the ones you received when it was being done to you, but don't stop writing *until all your guilt about doing it is dissolved* through understanding, and you realize that you also served others by being that way.

Then go to Column 5 and ask yourself about their *opposite* quality. Write the initials of *everyone who observes or recognizes this opposite trait in them*. Keep going until you can truly sense that the person in question has a *perfect balance of trait and anti-trait*. This can be a surprising and liberating column, showing how the traits are balanced in everyone.

Then go to the second negative trait in Column 1 and the repeat the same process in the following columns. Don't move on from any column until it's balanced, until you stop judging it as only wonderful and your experience is neutral. Repeat the process for the remaining positive traits until all the columns are filled and there's nothing left to idolize the person for.

Words of Wisdom and Power

I acknowledge that I already have - in some form - what I am seeking in others.
I am a unique expression of all things – good, bad, happy and sad, great and small.

I encompass all things, and so does everyone else.

If two people were exactly the same, one of them is not necessary.

I am a human being with every trait serving me and others in perfect balance.

Whatever appears, I look for its other side.

I cherish all my traits and use them wisely.

I recognize that people are true to their own values, not to one another.

Owning Your Negative Disowned Parts: Your Dark Shadow

Remember, every person has every trait. To re-own your disowned *negative parts*, think of a person that you *dislike*, *resent*, and *despise*. Consider these questions when you begin with Column 1 of the next exercise:

- Who is running your life or burdening you the most?
- Who pushes your buttons the most?
- Who would you least like to be around?
- Who do you despise or resent or can't stand the most?
- Who are you "incomplete" with?
- Who "hurt" you?
- Who left, abandoned, or dumped you?
- Who are you having difficulty loving and would love to love more?
- Who do you perceive as being in your way?

Now go to Column 1 on the next page and write down all the most negative and hurtful traits about that person, for example, "Wasn't there for me" or "Stingy." Continue listing the person's negative traits, writing only one trait in each of the rectangular boxes provided. If you say "Alcoholic" break it down, into the components of alcoholism. Get *specific*. Was it yelling, physical roughness, no money, bad breath, mood swings, broken promises, shame, social stigma - what? The more specific you are, the easier it will be to dissolve. Get to the real meat, the intense stuff that pushes your buttons, and don't hold anything back. Time multiplied by intensity yields results. Consider these questions as you look for negative traits:

- What is it about this person that makes them unlikable?
- What has this person done or not done that feels so bad?
- What character traits do they demonstrate that pisses you off?
- What is it about this person that makes you avoid and despise them?
- Why is it you feel hurt when you think of them?
- Why can't you be near them?
- Why don't you want to deal with them or want to see them again?
- Why do you resent them so much?
- What have they done or not done that you think you haven't or have?
- Why is it that you can't stand them?

Now go to Column 2 and write down the initials of *at least 5 people who have seen you as having the same negative trait* that you have written in Column 1. Think of all the people that you know have perceived you as stingy at some point - past, present, or future, keep writing *until you can see that you have the trait* in Column 1 *to the same degree* as the person in question, although it may be similar or different forms. It's essential to be really honest with yourself.

Now go to Column 3 and write down *how it is a benefit to you that this person has that negative trait*. Whenever somebody is putting you down, somebody else is lifting you up; when someone withdraws from you, somebody else attaches to you; when somebody criticizes you, somebody else is praising you; when someone is being stingy to you, someone else is being generous. *Keep the opposites in mind*.

Think of *all the ways this negative trait has served you* and keep writing until you dissolve all the hatred and resentment towards that trait. For example, how is this person's stinginess a benefit to you? Well, it may have made you independent, considerate, creative, and realistic. It may have taught you to save and develop a financial strategy. *Don't stop until you can say, "Thank God they have this trait,"* and you have no more desire to avoid or change it.

Now go to Column 4 and ask how *your having that quality has served others*. Some of the benefits will be the same as the ones you received when it was being done to you, but don't stop writing *until all your guilt about doing it is dissolved* through understanding, and you realize that you also served others by being that way.

Then go to Column 5 and ask yourself about their *opposite quality*. Write the initials of *everyone who observes or recognizes this opposite trait in them*. If the negative quality was stinginess, then who has seen this person as generous? Keep going until you can truly sense that the person in question has a *perfect balance of trait and anti-trait*. This can be a surprising and liberating column, showing how perfectly the traits are balanced in every human being.

Then go to the second negative trait in Column 1 and the repeat the same process in the following columns. Don't move on from any column until *it's balanced, until you stop judging it as bad and experience gratitude for it*. Repeat the process for the remaining negative traits until all the columns are filled and there's nothing left to judge the person for. *Keep going until you know beyond a shadow of a doubt that you appreciate and love the person*. This sets you and them free.

At that moment, you'll feel the presence of the person you're working with. You may have a visual image of them, hear their voice, sense them in some object in the room, or just feel them in your heart. That's the time to *communicate your love and gratitude, to thank them for their gifts to you and the role they played in making you who you are*. Pour it all out to them, and they'll get it in nonlocal communication. Then sit down and *write them a thank-you letter*, telling them how much you appreciate them and what a difference or contribution they made in your life. You may find yourself receiving even more insights when you do this. Writing is a powerful act that takes the intangible and makes it tangible.

You will definitely be transformed by the experience. This process is quite enlightening and beautiful, just like the *true you*.

YOUR DARK SHADOW

Quantum Collapse Process: Owning Your Negative Disowned Parts

Person's Name

1. TRAIT I DISLIKE THE MOST ABOUT THEM	2. INITIALS OF WHO SEES THIS TRAIT IN ME	3. HOW THIS TRAIT IN THEM IS A BENEFIT TO ME	4. HOW THIS TRAIT IN ME IS A BENEFIT TO OTHERS	5. INITIALS OF WHO SEE THE OPPOSITE TRAIT IN THEM
Stingy	T, G M, S, R, ST, C, BL, F, JD, B	Independent, Considerate, Creative, Realistic, Save, Strategic	Independent, Considerate, Creative, Realistic, Save, Strategic	P, T, D, L, R, G, M, ED, CH, DR

More Questions for Shadow Work Reflection

What do you consider to be your virtues?

Can you imagine the opposite of your virtues? Can you imagine that they could lurk in your unconscious? Can you see some place in the present, or in your history, where those opposites may in fact be manifest in your life?

Let us say you aspire to be honest. Is there a place where your honesty is *harmful* to another? Is there a possible place in your psyche where dishonesty lurks? Is there a place in your life's story where dishonesty cast the decisive lot? Of course, there is, if you are honest just for a moment.

Let us say that you are always caring and thoughtful of others. Do not your own *unaddressed needs* lurk in the underworld? Do not those needs, so often reflexively ignored, *show up* in leaks of anger, in depression, or in unacknowledged narcissistic manipulation? If I am so kind and thoughtful, can I even recognize these symptoms of repressed anger for what they are? Given how identified you may be with caring for others, is there a *price paid* for neglecting your *agenda*? In giving so much to many others, are you neglecting yourself?

Sometimes a virtue is not a virtue. Even your virtues *become demonic when not balanced by their opposite*. When we insist on the maintenance of virtue - our virtues, of course, we also necessitate the thought police with truncheons so that we may *impose our idea* of virtue on others, in service to our own psychological security. How virtuous is that? And how often does the claim for your own virtue camouflage the *will to power* underneath?

From the tree of virtue, much good may come, but no truly good fruit ever drops from the trees of *denial, resentment, guilt, or self-hatred*.

What are the key patterns of your relationships?

Where do Shadow issues manifest in patterns of *avoidance, aggression, or repetition*? Romance is the chief delusion, elixir, and magical potion of our popular culture. It is in itself a Shadow fantasy, for in this blissful state, one's wounds are healed, one's needs met. But because the seductive power of romance is so powerful, it distracts from the *accountability of consciousness*. Who really wishes to look within when it is so much easier to look for rescue without?

Yet without knowledge of our history - the programming fate inscribed on the childhood Imago of Self and Other - who could really expect the relational dynamics to be better than the childhood programming?

Only by humbly reflecting on our own areas of immaturity, and the courage required to confront our Shadowy history, can we pretend to enter into any relationship with Love. *Romance promises relief, but Love demands only new hardship – the hardship demanded by owning our Shadow issues and removing them from the Other.*

Life is difficult enough, and relationship very fragile, so this personal Shadow work may in fact be *our best way of loving the Other*. The fact that our relationships never prove to be more evolved than the relationship we have with ourselves obliges us to embrace our own Shadow, for what we do not know, or will not face, is bound to show up and impair the relationship with those we say we love.

Doing Shadow work within the context of relationship is especially difficult, for it may require us to relinquish our chief, perhaps unconscious, desire - namely *to be taken care of by an Other*. If we do not recognize this heavily charged desire, the relationship will sooner or later break under the burden of *expectation*, for no one can, or should, or will, take care of us. Let us change that sentence... *we have met the person who is charged with taking care of us*, and that is the one person with whom we lived since the moment of birth, and with whom we alone journey toward death.

What annoys you most about your partner, or others in general?

Is it not possible, indeed, is it not the case that *we chose that person*, or something within us chose that person, *precisely because of that annoyance*? The very thought is preposterous to the ego that thinks it knows enough to know enough. Why, in heaven's name, would we ever imagine that we might choose a person for their power to annoy us, unless we were full-blown masochists?

Freud noted the strange phenomenon of "*the repetition compulsion*." We repeat our patterns, even self-injurious patterns. Freud also noted that this "familiar suffering" is often preferred to the unknown suffering of the unfamiliar. Others have suggested that we choose the annoying, even painful, Other as *an effort to solve the issue the second time around*. This choice is the way in which the psyche heals by *working through the old wound in a more mature, more empowered way*. Seeing that we unconsciously choose the person who is emotionally like the caregiver(s) who wounded us in the first place, it should not really surprise us that we end up being married to the very person who is *least able to give us what we (think we) need most in order to be whole and happy*.

Shadow work on relationship obviously and once again begins at home, with ourselves. But who wants to do that when it is so much easier and more gratifying to *blame our partner* or friend? Those who have experienced early relationships as invasive will *fear intimacy* and will find ways to distance themselves through diversions and emotional reserve.

Those who suffered insufficiency of nurturance will have a tendency to *ask too much* of the other, be clingy, demanding, controlling, obsessional. Both will get what they expect, and what they unconsciously want. It requires a deep look within to bring this to the surface and to find that the annoying antagonist is within after all.

The dependent clinger claims to wish closeness and intimacy, but *do they really?* Can they bear togetherness? The reserved isolator claims to wish distance and freedom, but *do they really?* Can they bear separateness? Can we evolve a relationship while we grow individually? *What happens when one person grows and the other refuses to do so?* I get asked that question at least once a week. The speaker, presumably, is always the one who is willing to grow, and their partner is stuck. Perhaps....

We need to see that what is wrong in the world is wrong in us, as well. We are less likely to wound our partner, despise our neighbour, or hate our enemy when we recognize that we share a common condition, a common set of aspirations, and a common fallibility.

Where do you repeatedly undermine yourself, create harmful replications, produce the same old, same old?

Where do you flee from your best, riskiest self? None of us begins the day thinking, "Well, today I shall do the same stupid things I have been doing for decades, but it will all turn out better." Yet, every day, unconscious scripts flood the ego, and those familiar, predetermined choices result, even as we believe ourselves free and conscious.

The one message all of us received as children was that *the world is big, and we are not*; the world is powerful, and we are not. That is why it is so tempting to blame the Other, whether the parent of the past or the partner of the present, for our self-sabotaging choices that bind us to our disempowered past.

As the repetitions of our history so frequently undermines the power we have to choose and create new patterns, we need to recognize and to struggle daily with the fact that the enemy we face is the abiding power of our history, especially the *disempowering messages of our childhoods*. Claiming our adult capacities, risking service to what wants to come into the world through us, is our challenge in maturity. Setting forth on the high seas of the unknown is where we are meant to be. *Allowing our history to prevail is hugging the shore.*

Where are you stuck in your life, blocked in your development? What fears, what familiar issues block your growth?

Actually, all of us know where we are stuck. And if we know we are stuck, *why do we not get unstuck?*

We are stuck because the stuck places are “wired” to complexes, energy clusters from history. These complexes have a *powerful charge of energy and a “fight or flight” plan* accompanying them, and they may be triggered by multiple stimuli. The trigger may present itself as something new, but we view it through the old lens, and we *repeat the old feelings*.

Take this common complex, for example: The vast majority of people have anxiety about *speaking in public*. They have opinions and are perfectly willing to talk at length to a friend, but they are petrified of speaking in front of others. It is easy enough to trace this link of public exposure to a *primal threat, the fear of the critical opinion of others*. Who has not suffered the loss of approval, or criticism, at a time when one’s own sense of self was most fragile? Thus, the old machinery hums below, is activated by a new summons to public exposure, and old anxiety floods into the consciousness of the adult.

All of us have these stuck places because we are all “*recovering children*.” Getting unstuck will demand that we take that anxiety on, even if we don’t know what it is. Stepping into that difficult place, wading through it, is never going to be easy. We all know that our frontiers are easily circumscribed by our fears. Pushing back is how we grow up and claim the life we are meant to live.

Jung said *we all walk in shoes too small for us*. As constrictive as our personalities are, they are familiar; they are who we have come to be. Invisibly, we betray ourselves daily with a thousand small betrayals, a thousand collusions with fear. Even if our psyche protests, and is dismayed, stuckness can feel like home. But we have to leave home if we are to grow up and claim our lives.

Where do you refuse to grow up, wait for magical solutions to the raggedy edges of life, expect rescue, or someone to step forth and take care of it all for you?

Where is the guru who will make these choices easy for you? As we know, we are all recovering children stumbling about in big bodies, big roles, big consequences, but what varies is our strength, or resiliency, and our will to become.

Our internalizing of our social paradigms said to us, in so many words: “*This is the way it is, who you are, and what you are to do and what to value*.” Obedience to these rules estranges us from ourselves and cuts us off from the internal guidance system of our instinctual life, and from that force within that seeks to move through us toward embodiment in this world. Our Shadow is built around *admonitions* that: 1) *we may not oppose our diminishment*; 2) *we must forlornly seek rescue from others*; 3) *we might find someone with all the answers to tell us what to do*; or 4) *magic may be found in self-help books, itinerant gurus, or the seductions of the popular culture*.

Our continuing work revolves around this paradox, that *what we are looking for already resides within us*. Finding the inner authority of our whole and authentic Self, which obliges us to live with courage in the world, is our task. *Why should we think that nature did not bring us into life equipped for the journey?* Is it not a form of negative inflation to consider ourselves unworthy of life, or lack the permission to be who we are meant to be? Why should we look to someone else to tell us how to live our life?

Where do Mom and Dad still govern your life - through repetition, overcompensation, or your special-treatment plan?

The "mom" and "dad" to which we allude here are *not the outer people we once knew*, but a massive set of *messages that we internalized*: first, as template for what the world is about and how one is to act; second, as a set of messages about *yourself*, your worth, your script, your entitlement; and third, as a generalized message about one's *relationship* to others and to the largeness of life.

When we examine the patterns of our lives, we will often find, to our dismay, that we have slipped into repetition, or overcompensation, or our own treatment plan. *Repetition* is easy enough to see. *Overcompensation* is common as well. Under every power complex the frightened child is hiding. ("I will be anything except like my mother." "I will be a better dad than my father was." Yet one is still subject to definition by these inner parents.) The election of a "treatment" plan can range from total *repression* of an issue, to a life of *diversion* and superficiality, to addressing the issue in a *compulsive* way in one's adulthood. Who among us has not sometimes eaten too much, drunk too much, protested too much, worried too much, or run toward mindless oblivion as an inviting "treatment" plan?

In all three of these patterns, one is still a *prisoner of the past*. Until one can set it down, one remains enmeshed in the thing one wishes to flee. In the end, it is not about "mom" and "dad" at all. They are merely metaphors for our primal messages about self and world. Even the most thoughtful parents in the world leave a Shadow behind, and there is *always some task of life for the child to clean up*. So, it is not about them. *It is about us*, about the messages to which we subscribe, whether we know it or not. We are obliged to admit to ourselves that the past persists. We all have haunted houses. And as Jung observed, "People are less afraid of ghosts than becoming conscious of themselves."

Shadow as Invitation

Sooner or later, we are invited to face this paradox: since the Shadow is composed of *what I do not wish to be*, my deepest, most denied Shadow will be found in what I most wish to avoid, namely, *becoming me*. That which I seek to avoid is me, but that feels too risky. We find, then, that *all our difficulties with the Other begin with and include the Other that is within ourselves*.

We are here to meet our whole Selves, on this road of personal brokenness, doubt, despair, defeat, cowardice and contradiction, with only scattered moments of luminosity. When from time to time we meet ourselves, when we meet our Shadow, we are most fully in the game, in the arena in which meaning is won or lost.

We may not be thrilled with what we find in our Shadow, but we will rediscover that *"nothing human is alien to me."* Wholeness cannot be, by definition, partial, so our theologies and our psychologies cannot remain partial either, even if our ego is sorely troubled by holding the tension of opposites that wholeness demands of us.

The apparently shadowless person is either naive and superficial, or profoundly immature and unconscious. *Our goal then, is not goodness, but wholeness.* The challenging paradox remains: *We will never experience healing until we come to love our unlovable parts, for they, too, ask love of us. Our sick places are sick because no one, especially not us, loved them.*

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