

SoulCollage®

## Archetype or Council

### Interview



*Moving from Arrghh to Aha!*

There are numerous ways to describe, explain or characterize what archetypes are or mean. Search until you find one that resonates for you – as these energies really are an integral part of your soul. The more you can speak to your own archetypes, understand their gifts and ways of being and doing through you, the more you will achieve your goals and reduce needless suffering in your life. Archetypal language, or the way our archetypes act as a guide and communicate with us, is impersonal and coded through symbol ology – so it is often confusing until you begin to understand it.

Archetypes have been around since the time of Plato, who referred to all the various archetypes as universal energies translated into form – or patterns of behaviors, ways of being, doing, perceiving and the like. For example the form of Beauty, is abstract and can apply to all beautiful things. Individual manifestations may be a beautiful person, horse, flower, rock, or chair – the form beauty does not change. Many archetypes are derived from historical roles in life such as the Mother, Child, Trickster, Prostitute or Servant. Archetypes can also be universal events or situations such as Initiation, Death and Rebirth. Not all archetypes are traditional roles per se but characterizations of an energy such as an Addict, Advocate, Networker or Light bearer. Some ancient archetypes are not very common today while still others are being created because our planet needs them right now such as the Computer Geek.

Along with our individual personal unconscious, which is unique to each of us, Carl Jung believed that “there exists a second psychic system of collective, universal, and impersonal nature that is identical in all individuals, called the collective unconscious.” This is inherited rather than developed and is characterized in all the different archetypes. Although archetypes are ancient and universal, they become personalized when they are part of your own psyche or soul.

You likely have a dozen or so primary archetypes that may be all acting at once, maybe show up in certain aspects of your life or perhaps different era’s in your life. Typically you will identify strongly with a dozen to twenty, and perhaps slightly with even more. We can all see ourselves or someone in almost every archetype. There will be some for which you have no personal connection with whatsoever as well. Some you may aspire to have in your psyche and those are valuable too in a different way.

Your primary archetypes, or patterns of behavior that are uniquely yours, are your intimate companions, whether you are aware of them or not. Because they are inherited you can’t trade them in, so better to get to know them and their role or gift in your journey. Archetypes provide the foundation for your personality, drives, feelings, beliefs, motivations and actions. They are not passive but play an active role as guardians and inner allies, awaken you to danger and falling into destructive behavior. The Saboteur, for instance, comes to play when you’re in a situation in which you tend to sabotage your best interests –or allow others to sabotage you. When you learn to recognize this pattern, the language

of the Saboteur archetype in you, instead of denying or ignoring its presence, it becomes your friend and helper, which is why they belong in your SoulCollage® deck.

As with all other suits in the SoulCollage® deck, all archetypes have a shadow manifestation, an unhealthy or productive way of behaving, as well as a positive aspect or helper aspect. The Rebel, for example, can be a powerful force leading you to reject illegitimate authority and strike out on a bold new path of action. But if you let your awareness lapse, the shadow aspect of the Rebel can induce you to rebel against constructive, positive leaders or to fall in love with the trappings and image of rebellion.

There are several methods to try and determine what primary archetypes you inherited. You may have already made a card for some of them and discover this later. Conversely you may discover them and intentionally make a SoulCollage® card for them. One way to discern between a fleeting and an aspiring archetype from one of your primary actors is to interview them. Try this process over time.

1. Take a list of archetypes and review it. A great source for a list is Caroline Myss's ***Sacred Contracts: The Journey-An Interactive Tool for Guidance*** or her ***Sacred Contracts*** book. Write down any archetype you have a strong reaction too, that resonate powerfully, either positively or negatively. There are no negative archetypes, only negative interpretations. If need be use other resources to understand enough about each archetype in order to select it for further review. Think about both the light and shadow aspects. Some may align with your occupation (Politician, Craftsperson, Athlete, Teacher or Judge). They may define your nature away from work (Nun, Poet, Lover, or Rebel).
2. Take another look at the list – try and number them from 1 to N, where 1 is what you think has the strongest presence over your entire life time. You are looking for those that are a part of your intimate family of patterns – by tracing its lifelong influence on you. Or just choose one with the intention of observing its characteristics in your own behavior. Try and make a list of at least 8.
3. Interview each one with the following questions. Based on the interview determine if this is a primary (been around since birth, even if sometimes dormant) archetype for you. Imagine this archetype sitting across the table from you and ask it these questions directly, or write a letter to the archetype, allowing the archetype to respond, the answers coming from your own intuition. Most of these questions came from Caroline Myss's ***Sacred Contracts: The Journey-An Interactive Tool for Guidance***
  - What events or personal characteristics led me to choose this archetype?
  - How long has this archetypal pattern been part of my life?
  - What role has this archetype played for me?

- Which prominent people have interacted with the aspect of my nature supported by this archetype? (For example, if it is the Teacher archetype, think of the people who have played an important role in your own education.)
- What relationship might it have to my personal unfinished business—to those people I haven't forgiven, or to events in the past that I can't let go of? And might this archetype now help me in healing those situations?
- What myths, fairy tales, or spiritual stories that have meaning for me do I associate with this archetype?
- Has this archetype appeared in my dreams?
- Does thinking of this archetype make me feel empowered or disempowered?

Looking for spiritual resonances with this archetype ask it:

- What impact has this archetype had on my spirituality?
  - What have I learned about my own shadow aspect through this archetype?
  - Has it caused me to block or forgo change that needs to happen, or has it facilitated that change?
  - What guidance might this archetype have to offer me in the present moment?
4. After questioning each prospective archetype, weed out those that aren't genuinely part of your support team, and then return to your list to select replacements. Continue until you have at least 8 that feel confident play a major role in your life.

Remember never evaluate your connection to an archetype merely by obvious markers – that is not the language used by archetypes. You have to stretch your imagination and delve into yourself to discover your life patterns, lessons and gifts. This inner knowledge does not surface easily.

5. Other suggestions are to pick out a role or situation you are working with and find the archetypal pattern in it, when in that role or situation. Observe, be curious, ask questions, journal about it.
6. Listing archetypes that are definitely NOT you or that you have zero connection with helps move you closer to those that you do connect with. Many types seem the same, and are related, but manifest differently. For example the Knight and Warrior both go to battle, but the Knight has in it whereas the Warrior does not.

Caroline Myss suggests we all have four common Archetypes. Those archetypes would include the child, victim, prostitute and saboteur. There are variations within these as well. See additional handout for more information on these.