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ARCHETYPES

A JOURNAL OF RECOVERY, BROTHERHOOD & THE INNER LIFE



FROM SHAME TO SELF-ACCEPTANCE

Loving Reparenting, Recovery Tools,
and the End of Compare and Despair

The first fire of the Archetypes newsletter

Written and curated by David "Indy" R.

Tribe Anthropologist, Newsletter Editor and Co-Founder
Vancouver, Canada



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Archetypes

Magician
Lover



Quarterly Newsletter
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Welcome to the first edition of Archetypes. We hope you will find within these pages ideas, support, and identification with other men who struggle with challenging childhoods. Our goal is to connect ACA men to each other, and help us heal and grow.

SHAME HIT

Some adult children running from the pain of a relationship will create a situation in which he or she can experience a "shame hit."... As odd as it sounds, many of us seem addicted to shame or abandonment. Since we grew up with an orientation to fear, shame, and abandonment, we seek out situations that recreate these feelings in ourselves. This is a shocking claim, but many of us can relate to it. -BRB, pages 136-137

I was hanging out in a virtual parking lot with some guys in a meeting recently, and the issue of Trait 4 came up, especially the last part which uses the phrase "fulfill our sick abandonment needs." As we talked about this, I started looking through the Big Red Book, and found the above statement.

No one remembered having read that passage before. But we all agreed that it really hit us like a ton of bricks, that it was very revealing. And it got me to thinking about my life and the troubles I've faced over and over again, to the point of pitiful demoralization and finally arriving at ACA. Am I really addicted to "shame"?

The truth is that I've had one good relationship in my life. And even that one became enormously painful after about a year. When I remember back today, I can recall an absolute fear of abandonment there. I wanted to hold on, despite the obvious problems. I couldn't bear to be alone. But I did let it go.

All subsequent relationships were short-lived except one, which I have been in for 30 years now, but which has been a nightmare for the last 24 years. Despite this, I have steadfastly hung on, and they have

hung on to me. Finally I found another person so addicted to chaos and pain and fearful of abandonment that we consistently abandon each other over and over. Ouch... saying that really hurts.

Mostly I am alone and deeply lonely. When my partner is not around, I am resentful. When they are around, I wish they'd leave me alone. I can't seem to make up my mind. It seems clear, we're addicted to each other (as well as each of us being addicted to other things too).

Crisis after crisis, rarely taking proper care of myself, hiding in addictions to sex, video games, spending money... all of which provide a temporary "high" that leaves me feeling worse in the long run. I think I seek out rejection. It makes me come across as irresponsible, troublesome, and then I get more rejection, which ironically gets me stirred up and bizarrely, I feel a little better, like I'm getting a "hit" of dopamine or something.

I lost my job recently. I was devastated. I had it for 24 years. In the early years there were no problems. But I was such a workaholic that all I got was praise. But I couldn't keep it up, especially as relationship problems came to the fore over and over, and through that chaos I began to relive my history of severe childhood physical and sexual abuse. A history that I had long suppressed and denied. This accelerated behavioural compulsions and I dived deeper into them, especially my sexual addiction, but also others.

I entered a world that was all too familiar. I felt completely helpless. And couldn't talk myself out of it. I played video games for days on end, missing work deadlines, and when called on it getting defensive. I would also spend hours watching porn. When I was exhausted from those, I ordered things online, and spent a fortune. I neglected housework,

eating, sleep, and so on. I got away with it because my partner was as addicted to his own stuff. We were both hiding in fear, and blaming each other.

Loneliness, isolation, secrecy, despair and DENIAL all combined to bring me to an ACA Bottom about 4 years ago. I can no longer continue doing these things. And I have to stop hating myself. I have to accept consequences, to break through denial, not because I DESERVE all of those consequences, but because I CANNOT DEAL with them responsibly while in denial of my history and my part in avoiding the truth.

ACA has helped me, more than anything else, to see that my suffering was the inevitable outcome of a dysfunctional home. I didn't INTEND to create chaos in my life. It wasn't something that I understood. I also don't have to believe that I DESERVE my pain. Only I must break through the cycle of shame to see it

in its proper light. Then, and only then, can I know what the next right step is for me in addressing my life issues.

Strangely, giving up denial was not what I thought it would be. It has not turned out to be something that ignites more shame and blame. I can fight for myself when I'm not denying my part in the troubles I am experiencing. I can actually love myself FOR being troubled. That's something I never thought I would say in a thousand years.

My struggles are a LEGACY of my childhood. They were, in many ways, inevitable and unavoidable. But they are MY struggles, and ACA allows me to face them without contempt for myself.

This is, I believe, my path forward to a better life. -
David R

HOW WOULD I DESCRIBE LOVING PARENTS?

He would be patient with me.

He would ask me what I would like to do.

He would validate my feelings.

He would be interested in what I am interested in.

He would accept me for who I am, whatever that means.

She would not be such a prude.

She would appreciate men and boys.

She would devote herself to her sons.

They would encourage their sons to follow their own path.

They would provide an environment in which any painful truth can be told.

They would understand when I was struggling.

They would believe me.

POEM: WHO IS HE?

he is somebody

even when unnoticed

he is loved

and will love himself too

play and fun returns

he need not be ashamed

for he and his inner truth

have survived

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

As men, we were likely taught to use a lot of tools growing up. We might know how to hammer a nail, saw a piece of wood, use a pocket knife. Or perhaps we're good writers, or good at computer programming, or learned painting or pottery. Maybe you are a whiz in the kitchen. The possibilities are endless. Chances are we use tools every single day of our lives in some fashion or another. And we don't hesitate to admit that they are useful and necessary. We pick them up easily, readily and happily.

All tools are extensions of the self, allowing us to do more than our bodies could accomplish without them. We've been making tools for millions of years (2.5 million to be exact). And they have shaped us as much as we have shaped them. We evolved to use such things. They allow us a greater range of adaptability than any other animal on the planet.

But what about tools for our psychological and emotional healing? Do we know how to use these? Are we familiar with such "implements"? We may never have thought of it this way before. For men especially, these may seem strange, difficult to imagine, and foreign. We may even associate such tools with weakness and shy away from them. Because they seem not to be made of stone, wood or steel, we may think them useless. Certainly we are likely to be only vaguely familiar with them.

Actually, we know them better than we think. We just don't tend to use them in such a way as they impact our trauma. For instance, writing uses tools, but do we use it to explore our own experience, or simply to communicate information? Do we create art? This can be a wonderful way to connect with the interior self. It doesn't have to be something people will buy. Art can be personal and is also deeply built into us (think of all those cave paintings!).

The 12 Steps involve tool use, as does meeting attendance, reading ACA literature, calling others in the program. So the question then becomes: how do I use the tools I have access to? The telephone, the computer, the pen... they all can be called upon for our healing journey. But we must learn to use them in this way. And this requires that we trust that it is safe to do such things.

ACA provides a forum to create such safety. It is our main purpose in existing. Tools can be used to alter the world around us, but they can also be used to address our internal state of affairs. They can help us access our emotions and our deepest needs. Yet we men seem afraid to use them this way. Yet there is no reason to assume that these tools are not meant for such ends. Ponder how you can use the devices you possess in ways that reach inward as well as outward. Otherwise you are not gaining their full value.



THE JUNGIAN ARCHETYPES

Source:

[https://www.whats-your-sign.com/
12-jungian-archetypes-and-their-
meanings.html](https://www.whats-your-sign.com/12-jungian-archetypes-and-their-meanings.html)

COMPARE AND DESPAIR

Judging others and comparing ourselves to others is the classic sign of the inner Critical Parent. ~BRB pg. 307.

Suppose you and I are in a car accident together. You lose one leg, I lose two legs. Aren't we both going to need healing? Aren't we both going to need to learn new skills? Aren't we both going to need rehab, wheelchairs, prosthetics, etc.? Isn't the emotional toll going to be similar on each of us?

While my loss may seem objectively worse than yours, the truth is we are both in the same boat. Furthermore, the loss of only one leg may pose issues that do not exist when one loses two legs. And vice versa. In other words, it is not only pointless for me to resent that you only lost one leg, it is a misunderstanding of what is going on.

Similarly, when I imagine my trauma to be worse than someone else's trauma, I am not only defeating myself, I am depriving myself of the opportunity to share the struggle with them. I lose a valuable connection, and I miss the point of ACA in the first place. The assumption that no one else can comprehend my pain is simply wrong. And it separates me from them, leaving me more isolated and hopeless than I would be otherwise.

Of course our stories are not identical. But most importantly, we are more alike than different. All adult children know the pain of abandonment, abuse, and loneliness. Suffering is not a competition. There are no legitimate forms of mistreating a child. I try to keep this in mind at every meeting.

If you would like to contribute to future editions of this newsletter, please contact David R (Indy) at devedr@yahoo.ca or through WhatsApp.

Tribe Resources:

WhatsApp: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/GSMfqniDjBLD1WaWKlq8Wk>

Seventh Tradition: <https://paypal.me/12Steps347>

Meetings:

THE TRIBE: ACA MEN'S GRATITUDE MEETING / DAILY

North America Times: 2:30 pm PT, 5:30 pm ET / Europe Times: 2230 BT, 2330 CET / Sydney (Aus) Time: 0930

Meeting ID: 890 3200 3902 / Passcode: 837692

MEN, MASCULINITIES AND RECOVERY / MONDAYS

North America Times: 12:00 noon PT, 3:00 pm ET / Europe Times 2000 BT, 2100 CET

Meeting ID: 821 2056 1171 / Passcode: 808678

A NEW HOPE FOR MEN ACA / TUESDAYS

North America Times: 11:00 am PT, 2:00 pm ET / Europe Times: 1900 BT, 2000 CET

Meeting ID: 811 7457 5758 / Passcode: 007783

SYDNEY WEDNESDAY MEN'S MEETING / WEDNESDAYS

Australia Times: 7:00 pm Sydney Time / North America Times: 2:00 am PT, 5:00 am ET / Europe Times: 1000 BT, 1100 CET

Meeting ID: 999 3559 8599 / Passcode: ACASydney

HEALING IN BROTHERHOOD ACA / WEDNESDAYS

Europe Times: 1930 BT, 2030 CET / North America Times: 11:30 am PT, 2:30 pm ET

Meeting ID: 859 2343 0060 / Passcode: 499821

MEN'S STEP STUDY - TONY A / THURSDAYS

North America Times: 11:30 am PT, 2:30 pm ET / Europe Times: 1930 BT, 2030 CET

Meeting ID: 858 1124 3854 / Passcode: 523106

NO MORE SECRETS ACA / FRIDAYS

North America Times: 12:00 noon PT, 3:00 pm ET / Europe Times: 2000 BT, 2100 CET

Meeting ID: 856 5383 4416 / Passcode: 265140

BROTHER TO BROTHER SIA/ACA / SATURDAYS

North America Times: 1:00 pm PT, 4:00 pm ET / Europe Times: 2100 BT, 2200 CET

Meeting ID: 858 1799 7467 / Passcode: 663957



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TRIBE RESOURCES

Public resources, meetings and support



VISIT THE TRIBE

Welcome, unity, recovery and the public home of the brotherhood.

SCAN OR CLICK



PUBLIC RESOURCE LIBRARY

Newsletters, guides, workbooks and recovery resources.

SCAN OR CLICK



UPCOMING MEETINGS

Find the current men's meetings and choose one simple next step.

SCAN OR CLICK



NEWCOMER GUIDE

A gentle starting place for a brother who has just arrived.

SCAN OR CLICK



JOIN THE WHATSAPP TRIBE

Stay connected with the brotherhood between meetings.

SCAN OR CLICK



SEVENTH TRADITION

Help keep the meetings available and self-supporting.

SCAN OR CLICK

Links designed to stay simple for the reader

The website address remains stable even when the file behind it is updated.

Need help? Begin at ACATribe.org and choose Meetings or Resources.



SEVENTH TRADITION

The Seventh Tradition states that each group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

We have no dues or fees, but we do have some monthly expenses, such as a Zoom account, an AI account, and other incidentals that help bring this education to you daily, and support 13 meetings per week.

Anything you can donate,
goes a really long way to
HABO - Helping A Brother Out.

Your donations are a blessing,
but your **Presence is a GIFT.**

We couldn't do Recovery without you, Brothers.

Thank you. **Keep Coming Back.**



THE ACAD TRIBE OF BROTHERS