

Part Two – The Practice Of Power

Integrating The Shadow

“It isn't the mountain the wears you out, its the grain of sand in your shoe”

-- Robert Service

I have placed this section on its own, outside of the order of the other chapters of *The Practice Of Happiness* for a reason of focus rather than anything else. It could have gone in Chapter Four: ‘Why We Hold On To The Negative’, however the mental focus generated by the following is somewhat different. In this section I will be talking about identifying and integrating the shadow into our practice and this mindset is different than that of noting our resistance to letting go of negative thoughts as discussed in chapter four.

Because the shadow is where our most powerful value judgments will come from, we need to address this aspect of ourselves in a little more detail. If we do not, it can derail our good intentions. If we do address it however, we can actually enlist it in our efforts. It is a powerful ally. But first we need to understand it a bit better.

I mentioned in Chapter Five: ‘There Is No Such Thing As Good Or Bad’, that we want to focus on the facts of a given situation rather than our value judgments about it. Certainly this takes practice and at times is quite challenging. Sometimes though it is certainly more challenging than others. Sometimes we seem to react emotionally way out of proportion to the situation. This is usually a reliable sign that our emotional reactions, and thus our projected value judgments, are coming from the level of our shadow, rather than our persona.

The Classical Shadow

You will recall that the shadow is the result of the ego suppressing that which it feels is socially unacceptable and represents any kind of danger to us. Since we are in zoological terms pack animals, who rely for our very survival on each other, *the primary danger is of being cast out of the pack*. The result is the persona, the mask we present to society, and the shadow, all that has been suppressed.

In most psychological works you will find the shadow referred to simply as “the repressed parts of your psyche that society finds unacceptable”. It is almost always referred to entirely in the negative sense. It is said to be glimpsed when we make a “Freudian slip”, dream of ourselves involved in what we would normally consider vulgar activities, or when we daydream of strangling that rude customer. The novel classically referred to in regard to the shadow, by way of example, is “The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” by Robert Louis Stevenson. Dr. Jekyll is portrayed as a handsome,

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decent, well mannered Victorian gentleman while Mr. Hyde, his alter-ego, is portrayed as a beast; a selfish, brutal, ugly, and indulgent man.

Even fairy tales like “Beauty And The Beast” or “The Frog Prince”, which do give us a hint of the right approach and reward, still paint a rather one sided picture of the shadow. Marie Louise Von Franz, a Jungian therapist with a special interest in fairy tales, explained their hidden meanings and messages with a mastery that has yet to be approached. Yet even she remained polarized in her view of the shadow. Her book on the matter is titled “*Shadow and Evil in Fairy Tales*”. This has been the classical portrayal of our shadow side. It is quite incomplete and totally misleading to our considerable loss.

As classically portrayed, we would not be inclined to want to be re-united with our shadow. We have been socially encouraged to rise above our “base” nature through the practice of virtues, manners and religion. The real nature of the shadow is quite different however than it has been portrayed. It is different in two ways. Firstly, what is considered the negative side of the shadow is in fact not negative at all, and secondly, there is a golden side to the shadow that has been wholly ignored. There is actually much to be gained by seeking to re-unite with our shadow.

The shadow does not represent our base nature but instead represents our personal power. The shadow is made up mostly of our strengths. Consider what “society” finds unacceptable – anything that is extreme. Extreme is what the ego, with its scalpel of socialization, cuts away from us, leaving us with the pleasing, well mannered persona that will never rock the boat. Our persona is generally a fairly mild character. It is socially acceptable, that is its whole reason for being. It may tut-tut when it disapproves of something or flirt with a little thrill of romance, but it is not passionate. The shadow is passionate.

The usual set of extremes that comes to mind are along the lines of things we have been socialized to think of as negative; envy, sloth, gluttony, wrath, pride, lust, and greed - what Christians refer to as “the seven deadly sins”. This is the usual portrait of the shadow – the beast. But there are other extremes. There are the extremes of our creative aspect, our nurturing and loving aspect, our spiritual aspect, our regal or noble aspect, our martial aspect and our capacities for passion, ecstasy and the ability to lose ourselves in joy, pleasure or work. The ego cuts away and relegates to the shadow ALL extremes, not just the “dark side” but also the golden. It cuts away *the entire 360 degrees* of our “extremeness” because it is all seen as risky. Any power, by definition, is dangerous. The result, the persona, is a safe but unexciting and unsatisfying entity. The result is the polite, quiet child who speaks only when spoken to; the adult who has an average but unsatisfying life.

This type of person is quite different for example than that of the pre-Christian warrior Boadicea, Queen of the Iceni, who led her tribe of Celts against the Roman Legions in the year 60 AD with considerable success. From her we get our modern term ‘bodacious’,

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meaning a robust, lusty, powerful and direct woman. I would venture she was a highly integrated character and that there was little of the shadow about her.

It was the Victorian era and those just preceding, the Restoration, the Enlightenment, the Renaissance, the historical periods following the dark ages subsequent to the fall of the Roman Empire, that largely created the shadow. Most pre-Christian cultures were much more tolerant and appreciative of the full range of human capacity. For generations now we have been taught to suppress our power and our powerful emotions. We have been taught to fear them while unconsciously we can not but desire them for they make us strong and whole, they enrich us and make us feel alive.

Ever since the Victorian era, the theme of evil people or monsters enslaving others or draining the life from us is quite common in literature and other entertainments. Dracula is the classic example. Remember that the satisfaction of his passions made him younger, stronger, and the Victorian author Bram Stoker even dared to hint of an effect on the libido. This is the authors sense of the effect of oppressive Victoria society, draining the life out of its victims and leaving them as “the undead”. They in turn seek to find or make up for what they lack by seeking it in others, they externalize their search for what they are missing, and turn into vampires themselves. The legacy we inherited from our Victorian forefathers leaves us seeking endlessly to find completeness through external sources; our hunger for love, for passion, for intimacy is suppressed and twisted into loveless sex, empty food and mindless entertainment.

A more recent example is an excellent film on the integration of the shadow called “The Dark Crystal”. If you have not seen it, it is a Jim Henson and Fran Oz “puppet” movie. In the film the world is ruled by the evil Skeksis race, a corrupt empire in its last days. They hang on to life by enslaving and draining the life force from a race of cute little elflike creatures called Gelflings. The race of good guys in the story are called the Mystics. They are old and are dying out but they have raised a single Gelfling they believe to be the last. His task of course is to undertake the heroes journey and free the world of the Skeksis rule. When he does so it turns out that the Skeksis and the Mystics where once one people that had been magically split apart. Without each other they were both dying races. When they are re-united in the end by the brave action of our hero they become much more than either of them were separately.

So too are we really only half alive without our shadow sides, be they Skeksis or Mystic. So too must we make the heroes journey to re-integrate our divided self. So too will we find we are much more than we presently believe ourselves to be.

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The Power Of Integration

You may have noticed that often people who are not “nice” are quite successful. Some of the most impolite, self-centered, rude characters do amazingly well in the world. The reason is that these individuals have suppressed much less of themselves than those who go around with being polite as their prime directive. As a result they are more connected with their personal power. Of course most people find them rough around the edges at times; most people are quite suppressed. Yet, one of the jobs of our psyche is to get us what we need and want and these individuals often do better at that than the general population. This is all they are doing, it is we who project upon them the value judgment of “not nice”. And we do so with considerable venom as it is something in ourselves that we refuse to accept and so fear.

Another characteristic of a well integrated person is commonly referred to as “charisma”. We all have charisma. We almost all relegate it to the shadow. That is why it is so rare. Charisma is simply the energy, vitality and power that comes from accepting our complete range of capacities. Charisma gives us great confidence and assurance. Charisma holds our head high, makes direct eye contact, smiles, and is focused on the other. Charm, an ancient word for magic, is the hallmark of the charismatic person. They are often glamorous, another word that originally meant “under a spell”, for indeed, they are often enchanting. An excellent example of the power of charisma was the young Arnold Schwarzenegger. As a young competitive body builder when he walked out on stage *his charming smile and his confident bearing* said to the judges, “Relax, I am the winner. You can put your pencils down now and just enjoy.”

Charismatic individuals exude this power because they have not suppressed their strengths and relegated them to the shadow. They are not ashamed, embarrassed or guilty in regard to any aspect of themselves. They love and believe in themselves. Thus the negative thoughts and words of others towards them find no home. They have a very healthy psychological immune system that fights off any negative “viruses” that come their way. All this is available to us if we so chose.

There is one particular profession where people who may or may not have started out highly integrated often end up so. People in this profession are often charismatic and yet also often known for their extreme and “not nice” behavior. These are the actors of the entertainment industry. Because of their work, it is necessary for them to reach into themselves and connect with aspects most of us have relegated to the shadow. They must play Joan Of Ark and Gandhi, they must play Marylyn Munroe and Hannibal The Cannibal. They can only do so by finding and connecting with these qualities within themselves. Consider this example as a clue to the nature of the task at hand.

We love or hate in others what we do not accept in ourselves. Racism is one of the most visceral examples of this. The Jewish, Black and Asian peoples have all have suffered prejudice because westerners see in them aspects of themselves they can't accept.

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Remember we project our denied qualities onto others, no one and nothing is inherently good or bad or any other thing. The stronger our emotional reaction the greater the likelihood that it is our own disowned power, our own shadow that is speaking to us just then. This can be for us another kind of mirror, one we can use to our advantage to help us identify our shadow qualities. We can then allow them expression in healthy, useful ways that empower us and enrich us. The ego is all about fear but the shadow is fearless.

Far from being a negative thing our shadow aspect is something we very much want to re-claim and re-integrate. It is where 360 degrees of our strength and power lies and where our greatest potential for leading a really rich and satisfying life is to be found. Conversely it is also where, if left unrecognized, the greatest potential to undermine our efforts at happiness lies.

“No greater friend. No worse enemy.”

-- Epitaph to Lucius Cornelius Sulla, Dictator of Rome

Portrait Of Our Shadow

In order to begin we need to learn to recognize our shadow, to give it a face and a name. Lets look at some of the ways we can paint its portrait, a portrait of our own shadow.

I am going to dismiss three of the classic approaches to glimpsing the shadow: dreams, fantasies and “Freudian” slips . Valid as they may be there are easier methods. Besides, it’s not as if we make Freudian slips all day every day though it sounds like it would be a lot of fun! Some of us seldom or never recall our dreams and they, and our fantasies, are beyond the ability of most of us to self-psychoanalyze. I am going to focus on several other methods instead.

First, we can identify the “dark side” of the shadow by noting and collecting our strongest negative overreactions to situations, be they value judgments or emotional reactions.

Second, we can identify the “golden side” by noting the values or aspects we most respect, love and admire in others.

Third, by considering how our life takes mysterious turns as if someone other than ourselves is at the helm.

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The Dark Side:

Practice: Note your negative judgments.

The “dark side” of the shadow is identified more by negative *judgments* than just negative thoughts in general. Note your negative judgments as you encounter people through the day. Is that person a slob? Are the members of that race all mercenary? Are those loud people idiots? Is she a slut? Is that guy a self-centered jerk? Is that outfit ridiculous? *Remember, the stronger the feeling the more likely you are projecting.* Overreacting is almost always a sure sign that this is a trait in yourself that you have suppressed and therefore fear being around. You fear the humiliation you would feel upon being discovered.

Lets look at how each item in the brief list above translates to ourselves:

- That person is a slob. You would like to be able to relax more and worry less about what others think.
- Those people only think about money. You care more about money than you admit and would like to be more on top of your own finances.
- That crowd is too loud! You would like to loosen up, and have some uninhibited fun and maybe a few more friends yourself.
- That woman is a slut. You would like to be more connected to your own sexual energy and to have little more passion and wildness in your own life.
- That guy is such a self-centered jerk! You would like to be a bit less of a doormat yourself.
- What a ridiculous outfit! You wish you had the confidence to show your flamboyant side.

Notice how these kinds of judgments are often extremely general, they are usually about “those kind of people”. When we project, the other becomes a cardboard cutout, just a kind of a blank, featureless screen, and therefore less human. This is another way to identify our projections. Such projected versions of the other always crumble under the light of actually seeing or knowing the other person as an individual.

As you go through your day, catch yourself making these negative judgments. To make it easier to accept that these views reveal aspects of yourself, remember that though the judgments may be negative, the actual source of them is not. The shadow does not really have a dark side. *These aspects of you become corrupted due to their suppression.* This is a key concept to understanding this process. It’s not that you want to become a loudmouth slut in a clown suit. You want more passion, fun and self-expression.

In your list of values, traits and characteristics you are gathering from the “dark side” towards the portrait of your shadow, list the positive sources, not the negative expressions.

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The Golden Side:

Practice: Note the values, traits or characteristics you most respect, love and admire in others.

Just as most of us go through our day blithely making negative value judgments about others, we also make very positive value judgments about others. Again, we are reluctant to accept these thoughts may be about ourselves. That is after all why we suppressed them in the first place; to deny them. Yet like the negative judgments, they do reveal our true nature. In relation to both the dark and golden sides, our value judgments really tell us all about ourselves, not the other. The world is a mirror. This idea, that the world is a mirror, is one of the most enlightening ideas you can keep in your mind that I know of.

We may have suppressed our creative, nurturing, loving, spiritual, martial or noble aspects, or our capacity for passion, ecstasy and pleasure. If we have, and most of us have, we will project these qualities onto others and then find ourselves strongly attracted to those individuals. Again, this is most likely the case when our positive feelings about the other are strong. The stronger the positive emotional reaction, the more we are saying, “I love this about myself (but I am afraid to express it)”.

This projection is often the source of romantic love. Remember romantic love bears the hallmark of the shadow in that our feelings are way out of proportion to the situation. In the case of a charismatic leader we go further, “I love this about myself but I am afraid to express it. So I will support you for expressing it and for having the courage to do so. I will be your biggest cheerleader, fan or admirer.”

Lets look at that list of aspects again and consider how we might be projecting and denying our own potential and power in the world.

Creative aspect – do you strongly admire what others paint, write or produce? This is a reflection of this strength within you. Only your own self-imposed fear, your own ego, holds you back from expressing in this way. The important thing is not whether you are any “good” at it, but that you would naturally express this way and find great joy and satisfaction in it if nothing held you back. If allowed to express naturally, as it pours out of you, you enter a state called “flow” where time and all other aspects of the world are forgotten. This is considered a state of supreme happiness. Keeping an aspect of ourselves in the shadow is one of the most significant ways we make ourselves unhappy.

Nurturing and loving aspect – Do you feel strong admiration for people who care for or protect those who are most vulnerable, like children or older people? Do you feel a strong sense of duty, patriotism and cultural pride? If you harbor these feelings then you are more caring and loving than your ego will allow you to risk. Remember the ego is a well intended jailer who sees you as a child it wishes to protect from pain and harm. You are no longer a child. You are an adult that knows that the ability to love requires the acceptance of pain, not just of your own but the much more difficult kind, that of others.

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Regal or noble aspect – Are the kinds of people you most admire those who are able to calmly take charge, know their limits and accept responsibility? The regal or noble aspect of a person acts with clarity, commitment and firmness. They are resolute in their opinion of what is good, right and true, what actions must be taken and gracious in the face of opposition. They accept responsibility for their actions and experience their own pain and grief for difficult decisions in private. This is the king or queen in you. If these are qualities you feel a strong attraction to in others, these are qualities within yourself.

Spiritual aspect – Do you feel that those who have some form of worship, ritual, or faith in their lives are wise? Do you have a high degree of respect for individuals who demonstrate a commitment to their faith, whose lives, as Gandhi put it, are their message? Do you wish you too could walk the talk?

Not too many years ago, Fred Rogers, the creator of the Mr. Rogers Neighborhood television program passed away. This was a man who was the same off screen as on. His personal view of the basis of his show was that it was a vehicle to demonstrate how many ways a person can say “I love you”. Fred’s life was indeed his message.

You do not need to live like Mahatma Gandhi, Fred Rogers, join a monastery or shave your head to live your faith. You have only to be open to it, to hear its message already written in your heart and to seek it out its expression in the form that is uniquely you.

Martial aspect – Do you feel a great sense of patriotism, of pride in and respect for the members of our police and military forces? Do you admire those who serve and protect, who demonstrate a high degree of skill, courage and discipline? Do you feel a strong surge of protective energy when you see others being treated in an abusive manner? If so the warrior aspect of you is suppressed and exists as a powerful potential in your shadow. The warrior aspect exists to protect us against trespass.

This is just a partial list, there are many positive aspects and strengths to each of us, an entire spectrum of radiant energy and power. Consider your heroes. They do not only reflect your potentials *but who you already are*. Even in small ways you can *catch yourself admiring or liking others* moment to moment as you go through your day. Make a mental note that *what you are admiring in others* you possess yourself and would really like to express more. Try to identify exactly what it is about them that you like or admire.

We often find our strongest positive projections are reserved for those we are romantically attracted to. Consider what the traits are that you consider so appealing in those you find romantically or sexually attractive. Are they vivacious or sultry? Are they youthful or mature? Are they charming and outgoing or humble and helpful? Are they strong yet kind with a sense of humor? These are traits you would express and love in yourself if you would but give yourself permission to do so.

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In the preceding paragraphs, though we have referred to aspects of yourself in very loose Jungian archetypical terms, bear in mind that this is a convenience of language and communication only. Language is a double edged sword, sometimes it works against us, sometimes in our favor. In this case we have used some convenient terms to identify aspects of our psyche. Keep in mind however that this is only done for the sake of convenience; your self is not really made up of separate parts with labels. You are a single, whole entity without any parts or labels. Yet the convenience that language provides allows us to work with the self in the way we have described above.

Though the self is a single contiguous entity without parts or labels, there is an organic structure to it. There are areas where certain things are more concentrated than others. This is one way to conceive the archetypical aspects. The physical nature of the archetypical elements is that being transpersonal they are to be found in our common DNA. Like mythologies, they represent patterns in our DNA that transcend us but that we are dimly aware of and perceive yet are not able to comprehend. We are in this regard like a newt beside the highway who can sense the stones of the road but can not recognize the road itself or comprehend its meaning, the cars rushing by or the great civilization they represent. The archetypical structures are a very real, physical and biological form of instinctual intelligence and so are not to be dismissed as mere concepts. Yet to work with them we must conceptualize them using the tool of language and modeling tools such as mythology, Marvin Minskys' "Society Of Mind", or Jung's archetypes.

We will now turn to a third way of seeing our own shadow, by looking for its nature through inference again as we have done with its dark and golden sides, but by a slightly different approach, by looking for its trail. By looking for the traces of its hidden hand in our lives.

"We do not see the world as it is. We see it as we are."

-- Anaïs Nin

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Whose In Charge Here?

Practice: Examine the life you are living.

If you were perfectly happy I doubt you would be reading this book. Instead your life is not exactly as you would like it to be. There are likely many reasons for this. As mentioned in chapter two, due to the vast complexity and number of variables that make up our lives, the number of people and events involved and the sheer randomness and probability of it all, we are not in control of our lives to the degree we like to imagine. Or perhaps someone else is in control? If you seem to create the life you don't want rather than the life you imagine you do want, a good place to start looking for the cause of this mystery is your own shadow.

It is the shadow that makes some people chronically late. It is the shadow that makes you completely forget that really important meeting or event. It is the shadow that makes you overeat, overspend and over-everything. The reason these unexpressed aspects of your self seem to come out in negative ways is because they are *corrupted* by the act of suppression. They are not really negative and their current mode of expression is not reflective of their true nature. Thus we overeat when we want love, we screw up when we want challenge, we become ill when we want change. Our task is to identify their true nature and then find positive and rewarding ways of expressing them.

Many people have a profound sense that they themselves somehow create a life they don't really want, that does not really satisfy. They are accountants and they want to be singers. They are administrators and they want to be family therapists. They are government clerks and they want to be entrepreneurs. Yet somehow it never happens because they always keep creating more reasons that they can't change. They take on more debt, more material things, more responsibilities, more obligations.

If it is not you making this life you don't want then who is? Of course it is your own shadow. Just as it can make you late for that meeting or forget it entirely, it can make you say yes when you want to say no. It can make you take on more responsibilities when they are really the last thing you think you want. Partially it does this because it is willing to face the fact that there is more to being a singer, an entrepreneur or a family therapist than you might be thinking at the persona level. By imagining that all you really want is to be a singer, and holding this rather vague and glossy idea in your head about it, you do not face the aspects of your dream that another part of you finds undesirable.

Yet this is only half the picture of what is going on. Ask yourself what are the things that you feel you would have to give up in order to have the new life you want. How do you really feel about giving them up? The aspects you feel uneasy about giving up are the other half of the truth about who you are. Together they make the picture of your fully expressed self. It is a life that embraces all your strengths and capacities that will be the most gratifying and contain the least anxiety.

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If your life seems to be following this pattern of always creating what you do not want, there are some very good reasons to attend to the pain and pressure the shadow is exerting on you and find a way to make the necessary changes. If not for the best reason, which is to be your fully realized self, then at least because if you do not, your emotional and physical health will suffer. Together they are a powerful team of motivators.

Strong feelings or strong aspects of ourselves unexpressed lead to mild forms of depression. The body interprets the sadness and grief we unconsciously feel over this as a chronic injury. Not expressing what would truly bring us joy, causes us to enter a state of “learned helplessness”. We give up on more than our hopes and dreams. We give up on life. Our current life leaves only the taste of ashes in our mouth. What joy we knew fades. Our thoughts become negative. Unhappiness grows. This is the emotional price.

Physically, as a result of our emotional state, our immune system becomes depressed as well. Additionally, we do not take such good care of ourselves as we may once have done. Why bother after all? Soon many of the ills of our modern age begin to visit us and indeed their name is Legion.

Yet if we do make the choices that allow our shadow self to emerge and find expression, all the benefits listed earlier are ours and the ills avoided.

To use this message from the shadow to flesh out its picture, reflect on these questions:

1. What are the joys and satisfactions the life that you believe you want offers?
2. What are the things that you feel you would have to give up in order to have the life you want? How do you really feel about giving them up?
3. What aspects of your present life no longer bring you joy but have become a burden, a drudge or an obstacle to your self expression and growth?
4. Can you see a pattern over your life? Do you seem to consistently make decisions, especially at critical junctures, that keep your life the same in some ways over time? Do you always seem to gravitate to the same role, the same circumstances?
5. What does the ongoing creation of the life you do not want preserve or prevent?
This two pronged question helps identify the things in your present life that you value and to surface aspects of your “dream” life that you are uneasy about. This can be a particularly challenging question. Like addictive behavior or obsessive/compulsive behaviors, the real issue is what the behavior helps one avoid.

Here is the strategy to apply with the knowledge you now have as a result of asking those first three questions. Do not try to overcome the challenges that make up the answer to the third question. Focus instead on what you want as a result of the answers to the first two questions. *Focus on the positive.* Focus on what you want, not what you don't want.

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Whatever you focus on, you will get more of. If I put a \$100 bill at the end of a six inch wide plank which is laying on the ground and ask you to walk to the end of it to get it, you will be able to do so without any problem. If I put that plank between two buildings and ask you to try again, you will promptly fall off.

Focusing on the problems in your life and trying to make progress by tackling them head on seldom results in anything but a stalemate. Military strategists (and lawyers and politicians) always attack at the point where their opponents forces are weakest, not strongest. They pour all their efforts and resources on and then through the weak point. Carl Von Clausewitz, a classical military strategist called a version of this approach “the expanding torrent” and likened it to the tide coming in on a beach. It avoids the hard places and flows where it is easy. The hard places are eventually surrounded, isolated and engulfed. By focusing on what you do want it becomes easier to deal with those things you wish to let go of and to move on. Focus on the attractive picture of the full life that encompasses both your present strengths and those you wish to cultivate.

“An unexamined life is not worth living”

-- Socrates

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The Other Side Of Your Face

As mentioned earlier, I decided not to include the classical approaches to glimpsing the shadow of using dreams, fantasies and “Freudian” slips. Mostly because the latter two are too complex and require the aid of a therapist and the former happens too rarely to be of any value for most of us. There is another way the shadow shows itself quite regularly however and it is fairly easy to understand. I mention it really as a way of showing that the shadow is *always* an invisible part of our lives, it is not something that rarely is present or active, rather it is always present and active: *it is the shadow that laughs*.

It is the shadow that causes us to laugh, thus humor also reveals the shadow. Whenever you laugh, realize you are having a “shadow moment”. Ask yourself what was behind the laughter. This can often be a challenging place to accept ourselves because humor is often at someone else’s expense. It is a kind of relief that the bad thing, as in slapstick humor, happened to someone else and not us, or it is a moment of shared recognition of a social taboo or of an aspect of ourselves we have suppressed. It is not bad any more than any other aspect of the shadow is bad, it is merely a form of emotional release. In that, it is a cousin to crying and like that function, when we really laugh hard, we also cry.

Now that the aspects of ourselves we have suppressed start to emerge and we begin to see the rough sketch of the portrait of our shadow, how do we bring these qualities out into our lives and express them in a healthy way?

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Integration:

Practice: Reducing The Shadow By Expressing Its Aspects In Our Lives

Taking on your shadow aspects and being willing to express them initiates a process that feels very good. The ego had cut away all of our extremes and all of our strengths and deep capacities leaving only the pale persona. We had become like a winter sun, having little power and providing little light or warmth. Returning the energy and passion of the shadow to our daily lives lets us once again radiate our strengths and shine with real brilliance and power.

In terms of the medical paradigms of the ancient east, we will begin to feel these energies glow and emanate from the seven charkas that mark the major branch points of the central nervous system along the spinal chord. We may particularly feel the awakening of the root or Muladhara charka located at the base of the spine in the pelvic area, the one associated most strongly with Kundalini energy, sexuality and personal power. These sensations and awakenings will begin as soon as we even begin to consider the idea of the shadow as a real part of ourselves. It is a warm and loving reunion.

Consider the now complete portrait of your shadow based on your knowledge from its dark and golden sides and from what you can infer from the evidence of its influence on your life. On the “dark” side, be sure again to be considering the *positive sources* of your shadows characteristics, not its suppressed and corrupted forms of expression.

With this knowledge before you, consider how you can positively express these strengths and capacities you have identified. Some of them will be familiar and you will know immediately what the answer is, others will require some creativity. Remember that all that really matters is that you do find ways to express them. Some of them may indeed be daunting and the truth is that they represent a deep need in your life that will require drastic changes. Some of them will be less challenging. Either way, keep in mind the price for not expressing them and the benefits of doing so. Keep in mind that the more the shadow is unacknowledged and suppressed, the greater a stumbling block it will be to your efforts at finding happiness. Enlisting it as your ally will make your task infinitely easier. *Those last two points are the entire reason we have made this exploration into the process of shadow work.* Depending on how dis-integrated you are, you will find as you practice that the ability to let go of a value judgment is much easier when its true source is so obvious.

Just as working with the concept of choosing happiness takes time and practice, so too does the concept of working with the shadow. The more you practice and keep your real self “out there” rather than safely in the shadows, the more you will become used to the feelings that provide the feedback to tell you how you are doing. There is a “charge” that comes with the quality of life when we engage it with our entire being. There is an aliveness, an excitement, and boldness and a sense of adventure that comes with this stance. When that departs and you feel the deadening and dampening effects of living

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from your persona, *this is your wake up call*. Like happiness, living from our entire being is a choice. It too takes consciousness, intention and effort. It too rewards us a thousand fold.

Together these two commitments, the choice to be happy and the choice to express our entire being, form two parts of the foundation of a truly fulfilling life. The choice of happiness makes available the golden aspects of the world around us. The choice to live from our entire being make available the golden aspects within ourselves. There is a third dimension to this pyramid: the gold in others. There is a way to access this golden treasure, the gold in others, a way to engage it and enable it, to nurture and cultivate it. This process is closely related to the first two commitments in that it requires a positive outlook and courage. It is to this third commitment that we turn to next: The Practice Of Love.