

REFLECTIONS

Series 11, Archetypes Are Everywhere

Class Five: Archetypes with Family, Friends and Foes

The Age of the Unthinkable

In his best-selling book, **The Black Swan**, author Nassim Nicholas Taleb wrote about what he calls “the impact of the highly improbable”. We live in a world where “black swans”, events that once seemed unthinkable, have become regular occurrences. Think about 911, the 2008 global market collapse, terrorist attacks in spots worldwide and mass shootings in churches, schools and nightclubs. That’s the macro of us all.

To cope with the black swans in our own lives (the micro), the sudden and unexpected changes to the course of our lives, we must see how much they have affected our lives from the tiniest micro to the biggest macro. We must begin to weave that all together and understand that everything is connected to each of us.

And our link to understanding that is through our archetypes. For example, using an archetype we all have, the Victim runs rampant during black swan events because it’s easy to see yourself as someone inclined to be victimized by them.

Just as the Victim’s behavior would unfold with the fear of victimization (or victimizing someone else for your own benefit):

- Entrepreneurs can see quick change as an opportunity to make money off of catastrophes.
- Heroes can find that such occurrences bring out the bravery in them or inspire them to new beginnings: “If my old world (job, relationship, city of origin) is gone or no longer sustainable, it’s time to do something new.”
- The frightened Judge can use poor judgment and make bad decisions. The light side of the Judge can use discernment and the wisdom of Solomon to see that life isn’t so bad after all. It’s just change.
- The Gossip asks, “What do I listen to? Who do I believe? Am I someone who is susceptible to half truths or innuendo or am I able to separate truth from the prejudices of others? Am I letting gossip influence how I see others or how I see their cultures or religions?” The Gossip has to be particularly discerning when it comes to news and trash gossip pumped out constantly by the media.
- The Storyteller must ask, “What stories do I tell myself that either enhance my prejudices or open my heart?”

Using archetypes for discernment

From the list of archetypes discussed in this class so far (you can see them [here](#) in the class descriptions), pick one each day this week that you feel is a dominant archetype in you, and ask yourself the following questions:

- How do I behave with this archetype when sudden shifts happen in my life?

- Buddha said that change is constant. Why would that be different just because it affects me? Life is more than just about me. How does this archetype help me understand that truth? How does it hinder me?
- We may not like change but “like” has nothing to do with nature. Things will happen whether or not we like or “deserve” them. How does this archetype help me flow *with* rather than *against* that truth?