

Getting to Know Your Shadow



Use these simple strategies to help you shine the light on your own Shadow. These techniques will help you as you work to discover the parts of yourself that have been left behind and have failed to grow up with the rest of you. Once you identify these parts of yourself you can begin the gradual process of healing them and reintegrating them into your healthy awareness.

- **Examine conflicts in your work or daily life.** Take some time to think about the most recent conflicts you have been involved in at work or any other group situation. Who do you most frequently clash with? Who pushes your buttons? Consider which characteristics those individuals have in common. The people you have difficulty getting along with often possess some of your own Shadow traits.
- **Review your journal.** Reread your old journal entries to see if you can find common patterns. Are there certain situations that frequently cause you to lose control of your temper, such as traffic jams, losing a contest, or waiting in line? Think about the surface emotions that are triggered by those events, such as anger, and then look deeper for hidden feelings such as humiliation, fear, shame or inadequacy.
- **Scrutinize your blow-ups.** Whenever you experience a major meltdown take the time to record all the details as soon as you calm down. Who was involved, what was happening, where were you, and how did you handle things? Later you can review these notes to get insight into what triggered your negative response and begin to look underneath the obvious for hidden emotions. Does this experience remind you of any event from the past?
- **Analyze your dreams.** Sometimes your Shadow issues will appear in your dreams as your subconscious tries to bring them to your awareness. Record all dreams that you are able to recall and look for symbolic meaning. Once I dreamt that a stranger was trying to get inside the house I occupied. In the dream I frantically rushed to every window and door to lock out the stranger. This is classic symbolism of the Shadow: a “stranger” trying to get inside who causes a response of fear.