

## **Dreamwork in Spiritual Direction**

*“Dreams are impartial, spontaneous products of the unconscious psyche, outside the control of the will. They are pure nature; they show us the unvarnished, natural truth, and are therefore fitted, as nothing else is, to give us back an attitude that accords with our basic human nature.”*

– Carl Jung

Webinar presented by  
**Joan Alexander**

Joan (she/her) is a Spiritual Director and Supervisor who lives in Canada. Her training in spiritual direction began at The Haden Institute. She has an active spiritual direction and supervision practice with clients in Canada, the USA and the UK. As a member of Spiritual Directors International’s Board of Directors (2024-2027), Joan is passionate about spiritual direction and the ways deep listening heals our hurting world.

Married to Barr and with two adult sons, Joan identifies as a member of the (2S)LGBTQ+ community. She facilitates educational opportunities on queer allyship. Joan also presents on Spiritual Trauma (SDI ENGAGE 2022), Dreams – What They Mean, and The Labyrinth – Walking Your Path.

To learn more about Joan, visit her website at [www.joanalexanderspiritualdirector.com](http://www.joanalexanderspiritualdirector.com)

## Dr. Carl Jung's Archetypes

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To help us in uncovering the meaning of our dreams, Jung noted certain dream symbols that possess the same universal meaning for all people.

Archetypal dreams, usually occur at significant times or transitional periods in life. They often leave you with a sense of awe. Such dreams have a cosmic quality. They are often extremely vivid and stay in your mind long after you had the dream. You may also have recurring dreams – until you actually “get the message”.

Quite often, archetypes show up in what we call nightmares - because we do not “like” what they are trying to tell us!

Jung identifies **seven major archetypal characters**:

**1. The Persona** is the image you present to the world in your waking life. It is your public mask. In the dream world, the persona is represented by **The Self**. In your dreams, The Self may or may not resemble you physically or may or may not behave as you would. For example, the persona can appear as a scarecrow\*. However, you just seem to know that this "person" in your dream is you.

**\*The scarecrow is the observer (see the Enneagram for related descriptions)**

**2. The Shadow** is the rejected and repressed aspect of yourself. It is the part of yourself that you do not want the world to see because it is ugly or unappealing. It symbolizes weakness, fear, or anger. In dreams, this figure is represented by a stalker, murderer, a bully, or pursuer. It can be a frightening figure or even a close friend or relative. Their appearance often makes you angry or leaves you scared. They force you to confront things that you don't want to see or hear. You **must** learn to accept the shadow aspect of yourself for its messages are often for your own good, even though it may not be immediately apparent.

**3. The Anima / Animus** are the female and male aspects of yourself.

*This one is of great interest to me now as I work with my transgender siblings:*

Everyone possesses both feminine and masculine qualities. In dreams, the **anima** appears as a highly feminized figure, while the **animus** appears as a hyper masculine form. Or you may dream that you are dressed in women's clothing, if you are male or that you grow a beard, if you are female. These dream imageries appear depending on how well you are able to integrate the feminine and masculine qualities within yourself. They serve as a reminder that you must learn to acknowledge or express your masculine (be more assertive) or feminine side (be more emotional).

***\*\*Sexual dreams outside of your orientation can be quite disturbing, can't they? They are usually about this persona.***

**4. The Divine Child** is your true self in its purest form. It not only symbolizes your innocence, your sense of vulnerability, and your helplessness, but it represents your aspirations and full potential. You are open to all possibilities. In the dreamscape, this figure is represented by a baby or young child.

**5. The Wise Old Man/Woman** is the helper in your dreams. Represented by a teacher, father, doctor, priest or some other unknown authority figure, they serve to offer guidance and words of wisdom. They appear in your dream to steer and guide you into the right direction.

**6. The Great Mother** is the nurturer. The Great Mother appears in your dreams as your own mother, grandmother, or other nurturing figure. She provides you with positive reassurance. Negatively, they may be depicted as a witch or old bag lady in which case they can be associated with seduction, dominance and death.

**7. The Trickster**, as the name implies, plays jokes to keep you from taking yourself too seriously. The trickster may appear in your dream when you overreach or misjudge a situation. Or he could find himself in your dream when you are uncertain about a decision or about where you want to go in life. The trickster often makes you feel uncomfortable or embarrassed, sometimes mocking you or exposing you to your vulnerabilities. He may take on subtle forms, sometimes even changing its shape.

# DREAM MAP

1. TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

3. Energy

Highest      Lowest

4. Feelings

Sad, Happy, Guilty, Other

5. People - Same Gener

Group      Other      Baby

6. Animals

1. SETTING \_\_\_\_\_

10. What action is this dream asking of you?

9. Ending

8. Is There Humor?

7. Major Objects

## Additional Resources

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***To learn more about dreams and Jungian-flavored dreamwork, visit the following resources:***

### **The Haden Institute**

<https://www.hadeninstitute.com/>

Bringing dreamwork into spiritual direction is a beautiful way of supporting seekers. Are we, as spiritual directors, “qualified” to do so? Do we need to engage in learning opportunities before we do? Are there cautions to be aware of?

*Joan uses the methods learned in her spiritual direction studies at The Haden Institute with individuals and groups. She often reminds herself and others that “**the dreamer is the true interpreter**”. As spiritual companions, we simply offer education, questions and the spaces to process whatever is coming up in the dreamer/s waking life.*

### **Toko-pa Turner**

<https://toko-pa.com>

The Dreaming Way: <https://toko-pa.com/thedreamingway/>

*Joan has studied with Toko-pa Turner and is currently enrolled in a “Dream Lodge” (an interactive course). She will share the wisdom gained with upcoming dream groups.*

### **Spiritual Directors International**

<https://www.sdicompanions.org/>

*There are a variety of webinars (including dreamwork) available for purchase at SDI, where Joan serves on the board of directors.*