

Me and my SHADOW

Getting to know your other half – and by that we don't mean your partner, but the hidden side of yourself – can have huge benefits, as *Andrea M. Blundell* reports

Not merely a dark patch on the ground that follows you around when the Sun is shining, your shadow is, according to psychologist Carl Jung, your proverbial 'dark side', containing all the things you want to disown and deny, such as shame, fear, and anger. Yet, avoiding it is what many of us spend our entire lives doing. We'll obsessively chant mantras or attend spiritual workshops to escape feeling these 'negative' emotions, or even admit to them.

But we all have a 'dark' side. And the truth is the more you try to escape it by seeking only 'good' things, the greater its demand will be on your attention! This is because your shadow and light sides are connected, like the yin yang symbol, which was perhaps designed to explain this very phenomenon; both are needed to create the whole.

Trying to deny your shadow can lead to constant fatigue and a frustrating inability to find your calling in life – not surprising when you are ignoring half of yourself.

And, here's the big secret of the shadow: like a dragon slumbering on a pile of gold, it actually holds your greatest gifts and can be used to help you live a more balanced and fulfilled life.

TRY THIS...

Why not look at someone else's shadow? Write down all the flaws of the person you least like. Are they always jealous or selfish? Do they have a bad temper? Congratulations! You just listed all the things about yourself you don't like, and identified the pieces of your shadow you can work to reclaim. Things about others only bother you if they 'plug into' what you are hiding about yourself.

Hiding in the dark

The shadow has many faces, but here are some of its most common, along with the gifts it can offer.

ANGER – allows you to learn how to set boundaries and harness your personal power. Denying it can lead to a lifetime of feeling victimised and never embracing your full power or potential.

FEAR – helps you discern what you truly want, as most of your heart's desires hide behind fear. Avoid it, and you could end up as a constant people pleaser.

SADNESS – a cleansing energy that opens channels to great joy. If you refuse it, you jam your emotional passageways, creating numbness and an inability to feel happy, often called depression.

LONELINESS – offers you the gift of self-acceptance. If you always run from it, you never truly know yourself or connect with others because deep down you are only using them to avoid facing yourself.

SHAME – the head honcho of all the shadow emotions, and thus the hardest to face. Not dealing with it stops you from revealing your real self to anyone, ruining relationships you attempt or goals you hope to achieve.



Dig into your past

Kay Gillard, a shamanic practitioner in south London, helps clients release limiting beliefs they might have inherited from their ancestors or even past lives, using a combination of energy work, guided visualisations and sound. "We are given inheritances as lessons, but also gifts so we can do our healing work. For example, you might find knowledge and patterns from your parents have led to the path you are on now," she says.

Along with her business partner, Magin Rose, Kay is holding an ancestral healing workshop this Samhain, October 30th. For more information, visit starfirealchemy.co.uk or email info@starfirealchemy.co.uk

Shame on you!

Andrew Wallas, known as a 'modern-day wizard' for his ability to see and transform clients' core issues (themoderndaywizard.com; 0845 625 0650), says: "Shame is, by definition, all about secrecy, and it creates a feeling that it's not ok to be who you are. It holds individuals back from experiencing real joy and spontaneity." Andrew runs a workshop called Shame On You to help people achieve wholeness and a deep sense of self-worth, along with "new levels of authenticity, courage and emotional freedom". His advice for dealing with the shadow is to stop trying to eliminate it. "We can't get rid of anything. All we can do is loosen [the shadow's] grip by seeing it and acknowledging it. The more it is brought to the surface, the less power it has," he says.

