Twitter Thread by Arcana



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-THREAD- THE DEMETEREAN ARCHETYPE, Goddess of Grain, Nurturer and Mother

Previous threads about archetypes:

-Artemis: https://t.co/aJQbTNLeu5

-Athena: https://t.co/ONWmaojGyn

-Hestia: https://t.co/ize4ZvAv8J

-Hera: https://t.co/kB946w4Uxc

Demeter, Goddess of Grain, as Hera, Goddess of Marriage and Persephone, the Kore and Queen of the Underworld, is a vulnerable goddess. These 3 goddesses personify archetypes that represent the traditional roles of women : mother, wife and daughter.

The vulnerable goddesses are the relationship-oriented goddesses, whose identity and well-being depend on having a significant relationship. They express the needs in women for affiliation.

In Greek mythos, Demeter, Goddess of Grain, presided over bountiful harvests. She was portrayed as a beautiful woman with golden hair and dressed in a blue robe. Part of her name, "meter", seems to mean mother: she was worshipped as a mother of grain and of the maiden Persephone.

-THE ARCHETYPAL DEMETER- The Mother

She represents maternal instinct fulfilled through pregnancy or providing physical, psychological or spiritual nourishment to others. This goddess was provider of food (Grain) and spiritual sustenance (through the Eleusinian Mysteries).

-THE ARCHETYPAL DEMETER- Maternal instinct

On the biological level, she represents the desire to become pregnant and have a baby. Facing an unplanned pregnancy, Demeterean women are the less likely to have an abortion, and, if they have, they will feel grief rather than relief.

-THE ARCHETYPAL DEMETER- Food provider

Feeding others is a satisfaction for her. She finds nursing her own child tremendously satisfying, and it gives her pleasure to provide meals for family and guests. She is often attracted by countryside life and growing her own food.

-THE ARCHETYPAL DEMETER- Persistent mother

Maternal persistence is her attribute. She refuses to give up when the welfare of her children is involved. Many special education classes for handicapped children exist because a Demeter mother fought to get what her child needed.

-THE ARCHETYPAL DEMETER- Generous mother

In mythology, she was the most generous goddess. She gave us agriculture, helped raise Demophoön and provided the Eleusinian Mysteries. Some Demeter women thus provide tangible food and physical care, others give spiritual nourishment.

-THE ARCHETYPAL DEMETER- The grieving mother

When Demeter is a strong archetype, she may suffer from "empty nest and emptiness" depression. Then, rather than rage and actively strike out at those she holds responsible (like Hera) she grieves, her life feeling devoid of meaning.

-THE ARCHETYPAL DEMETER- The destructive mother

When grieving Demeter stopped functioning in mythology, nothing would grow and famine threatened to destroy humankind. Similarly, the destructive aspect of Demeter is expressed by withholding what another person needs.

-THE DEMETEREAN WOMAN- Early years

She is usually a little mother who cradles baby dolls in her arms, while little Hera prefers Barbie and Ken dolls and little Athena historical dolls. Young Demeter also likes to hold real babies: at 10 she's eager to babysit for her neighbors.

If her real life parallels the Demeter myth, and she has a maternal mother and a tyrannical father, she will grow up closely identified with her mother and unconnected to her father. In such a household, her self-esteem may suffer and she will develop a victim attitude.

Or, her Demeterean qualities may result in her reversing with immature and incompetent parents. As soon as she's old enough, she may look after her parents or become a surrogate parent for younger siblings. In contrast, if she has a father who is affectionate and approving (...)

(...) she will grow up feeling his support for her wish to be a good parent herself. She will view men positively and will have positive expectations of a husband. An archetypal susceptibility to become victimized will not be enhanced by her childhoold experience.

-THE DEMETEREAN WOMAN- Adolescence and early adulthood

Under the influence of hormones, some teen Demeters start yearning to become pregnant. They are the most likely to

welcome the child if they have been coerced into sex at adolescence.

However, lacking Hera's wish to be part of a couple and Aphrodite's erotic drives, Demeters are not motivated to have early sexual experience.

If they don't marry young & go to college, they will probably take courses geared toward preparing them to enter a helping profession.

She is not typically ambitious, intellectual or competitive. Status, contrary to Hera, is inconsequential to Demeter. Her friends are chosen across a wide social and racial range: she will make foreign students feel comfortable, aid the physically disabled and social misfits.

-THE DEMETEREAN WOMAN- Work

Her archetype predisposes her to enter the nurturing or helping professions; she is drawn towards "traditionally feminine" jobs such as teaching, social work or nursing. Some Demeter women even become key figures in organizations.

-THE DEMETEREAN WOMAN- Relationships with women

She isn't competitive with other women for men or achievements: any envy, jealousy of other women will concern children. She usually has mixed feelings about feminism: she resents it for devaluing the role of motherhood, but (...)

(...) she supports many women's issues, for example protecting children against abuse or providing shelters for battered women. Usually, she has solid friendships with other Demeterean women, which date back to when they were new mothers together.

-THE DEMETEREAN WOMAN- Relationships with men

She attracts men who feel an affinity for maternal women. A true-to-type Demeterean women doesn't do the choosing, but rather responds to a man's need for her. She may even be with a man because she feels sorry for him.

Common types of couple involving a Demeterean woman are:

Demeterean women + "son-lover" men, who are sensitive and talented men who feel unappreciated or misunderstood by others. They are immature, self-absorbed boys with a sense of specialness ;

Demeterean women + literal sociopaths, who act on the assumption that their needs entitle them to receive. They are incapable of emotional intimacy or appreciation, and forget past generosity or sacrifices made by Demeters, as well as their own exploitative behaviors ;

Demeterean women + family men, which is the best combination for this type of women. Those men are strongly motivated by their wish to have a family, are good fathers for their children and also look out for their Demeterean wives.

-THE DEMETEREAN WOMAN- Sexuality

When Demeter is the strongest goddess element in a woman's personality, her sexuality is usually not very important. Those women are either warm, affectionate, feminine persons who would just cuddle instead of making love, or they are (...)

(...) puritanical women who consider sex as a mean of procreation only. Some also think of sex as what a wife provides in the context of giving and nurturing - she is providing what her husband needs.

-THE DEMETEREAN WOMAN- Marriage

Marriage in itself is not an overriding priority for them as it is for Hera women. Most Demeter women only want to get married in order to form a family; they see marriage as a necessary step and as the best situation to bear and raise children.

-THE DEMETEREAN WOMAN- Children

She feels a deep need to be a biological mother. She wants to give birth and nurse her own children. She can also be a loving foster mother, adoptive mother or stepmother, but she would feel barren if she cannot have a child of her own.

A typical Demeterean woman's paradox is that, despite always thinking of herself as a good mother who has the best interest of her children in mind, she is either a superbly able mother or a terrible, all-consuming mother.

Following the myth, before the abduction of Persephone, Demeter trusted that all was well (as Persephone played in the meadow) and went about her activities. After the abduction, Demeter was depressed and angry, she left Mt. Olympus and ceased to function.

In real life, the "before" phase often represents the close and caring family life she has had, that lasted for some 25 years. The "before" phase represents the moment where her children seemed an extension of herself who shared the same values and hopes for the future.

The "after" phase arises when her last child leaves home and go on with his own life: she may then feel an "empty nest" and become depressed, as if her sense of meaning has been "abducted".

In another situation, some Demeter mothers always fear that something bad may happen.

Thus, they may act as if they anticipate the possibility of "an abduction" from the time a child is born. They will consequently limit the child's independance and discourage the formation of relationships with others. They will become overcontrolling mothers.

The children of controlling Demeters sometimes stay forever close to her, and may never marry. When they do, they often maintain stronger filial bonds than conjugal ones. Others may break away and stay away, creating both a geographical and emotional distance between them.

Another negative Demeterean model is the mother who can't say no to her children. This Demeter mother wants her children to have whatever they want, even if it's much more expensive than she can afford. Moreover, she fails to set limits

on behaviour and creates "Kings-children".

-THE DEMETEREAN WOMAN- Middle years

The midlife period is very important for her: if she has not had a child, she is preoccupied with her biological clock. Fertility specialists may be consulted, adoption may be considered, as the possibility of becoming single mothers.

If her children are growing, each step they take toward independance tests her ability to let go of their dependance on her. She may want a late-life baby. If she was leading an organization, she may feel a crisis when it's large enough for others to covet her position and power.

-THE DEMETEREAN WOMAN- Later years

In their laters years, Demeterean women often fall into 2 categories:

Many find this phase very rewarding. They are active, busy women who have learned from life and who are appreciated by others for their down-to-earth wisdow and generosity ;

The opposite fate befalls a Demeterean woman who considers herself a victim. Identified with the mourning, betrayed, angry Demeter who sat in her temple and allowed nothing to grow, such a woman does nothing with her later years but grow older and more bitter.

-PSYCHOLOGICAL DIFFICULTIES-

Being incapable to say no;
Unplanned pregnancies;
Infantilizing people;
Overcontrolling people;
Fostering dependancy;
Passive-agressive behavior (stem for the fact that they're being exploited w/o the ability to express it directly);
Depression;

-WAYS TO GROW-

A Demeterean woman must be able to choose when and with whom she will have a baby. She needs to recognize that the Demeter within her has no interest in the realities of her life and no concern for timing.

She must also absolutely acknowledge the negative behaviors stem from her good intentions. She must not deny the possibility that she may have engaged in passive-agressive behaviors, that she may have been overcontrolling or fostering dependancy. Then, changing is the easier task

Demeterean women must become their *own* good mothers: they need to "employ" Demeter on their own behalf instead of instinctively responding to others as if they themselves were Demeter.

To recover from depression, the myth of Demeter itself presents two solutions.

After Demeter knew that Persephone had been abducted, she left Mt. Olympus to wander on earth. At Eleusis, the depressed & grieving goddess was welcomed into a household, where she became the nursemaid of Demophoön. Thus she coped with her loss by loving & caring for someone else

Second, reunion with Persephone led to her recovery. The grieving mother was reunited with her eternally maiden daughter and ceased being depressed, functioned again as grain and fruit goddess, and restored fertility and growth to the earth.

Metaphorically, this is what ends a depression: the archetype of youth returns. As an inner experience, the myth of Demeter and Persephone speaks of a capacity to grow through suffering. A Demeterean woman may then, as Demeter herself, come to accept the existence (...)

(...) of human seasonal changes. She may acquire an earth wisdom that mirrors nature. Such a woman learns that she can live through whatever happens, knowing that jus as spring follows winter, so changing human experiences follows certain patterns.

-END OF THREAD-

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