

The Warrior (Action Taker)

An article by Marianne Hill

This article gives an introduction to the Warrior archetype. The Warrior is an aspect of ourselves that we believe we all have inside us. However, as shadows form in our early life, many of us lose touch with the full power and agency of this life affirming side of ourselves.

Recently I have begun to re-name this archetype the Action Taker. It speaks to me in a slightly different way to the word Warrior. I like each, but in this article I have chosen to use the term Action Taker. You are welcome to replace this with the word Warrior if that works better for you.

I find that an essential part of working with the archetypes is to start to make them your own and to feel into your own personal version of each of the archetypes. With this in mind I always encourage people to come up with their own names if they wish. So if, when you read this, you find a word that works better for you as a name for this part of yourself, then please feel free to use it.

The Action Taker

A sense of power and agency in the world

The Action Taker is the part of us that takes purposeful action to help us achieve our goals. This part of us gives us our sense of power and agency in the world. The Action Taker protects and defends us and helps us to move through the obstacles that inhibit our growth. This is the part of us that keeps our commitments, holds our boundaries, stands up for us and says 'No', 'Stop', or 'This isn't OK with me'. This part of us holds ourselves and others to account.

The Action Taker is solid, reliable and trustworthy, and is courageous in facing difficult situations. This is the part that speaks the truth, is on our side, is able to put us first and stands up for what we believe in.

Overall the Action Taker creates a safe space for us in which we can live, love and grow.

Taking effective action

As the name suggests, the special role of the Action Taker is to take effective action in the world. This is the part of us that can make a real difference. The Action Taker takes the action necessary to bring about the wants and the desires of our Heart Centred Leader.

Territorial instinct

Within each of the archetypes lies an innate animal instinct that we ignore at our peril. For the Action Taker the instinct is that of claiming, marking and defending territory. If we ignore this instinct we put a part of ourselves into shadow. In *Healing The Shadow* we prefer to acknowledge that this instinct is part of us and that there may be some benefits to be gained from accessing this part of ourselves. Once we acknowledge this, we have a choice about whether or not we act from this energy. Sometimes we might choose to act in territorial ways; sometimes we might choose to be more open.

Key emotion – Anger

The key emotion for each archetype is the emotion we need to be in touch with, and capable of feeling, in order to unlock the door to this side of ourselves. Being connected to our anger is essential for us to fully access our Action Taker and embody this part of ourselves.

Anger is like a strong message that comes up inside us telling us that something is not OK for us – a boundary has been crossed, a commitment has been broken, or something is blocking our growth.

If we are not in touch with our anger then we have no warning sign to tell us when our boundaries are being crossed. Our Action Taker needs to be alerted by our anger so that they can step up and take whatever action is required.

Anger also gives us direct access to our power. It gives us a surge of energy. This gives the Action Taker the strength necessary to follow through on whatever needs to be said or done to make the situation right.

Sometimes the Action Taker can do nothing to change the current situation. However, in such situations it is possible to harness the energy of the anger to help us move forward in a different direction and to grow more fully into who we want to be. For example, imagine a person gets unfairly dismissed from their job and feels a huge amount of anger about this. They then discover there is nothing they can do to right the wrong. So, rather than setting themselves a futile task, their Action Taker could, instead, choose to channel their anger and use the power it gives them to find a better paid, more fulfilling and more enjoyable job for themselves – maybe even to change career and to follow their dreams!

The element of earth

We find that the earth element is a good symbol for the Action Taker. The earth – in the form of stones and rocks – is solid, strong and never changing, and this represents the trustworthy reliable nature of the Action Taker. Earth in the form of soil represents the willingness of the Action Taker to ‘get their hands dirty’ – to deliver unpopular messages and to make difficult decisions.

Wounding message

The messages which particularly harm our ability to embody our Action Taker focus on our right to be who we are. There are several forms of this

wounding, any of which we may take on as a belief about ourselves. One is the message that we don't exist, another is that we don't (or are not allowed to) exist as a separate individual, and a third is that we don't have the right to be who we truly are.

If we picked up these messages early in life – from our parents, family, wider social community, or our teachers – then we will find it very hard to take any action which impacts the world. These messages take away any sense that we matter. We end up believing that we have no right to put ourselves first, nor to protect and defend ourselves, nor to grow. If we believe in any sense that we 'don't exist' or that we 'don't have a right to exist as who we are', then we won't be able to see any way we could set our boundaries or have any power or agency in the world.

Shadows

If we have taken on the idea that in some way we don't exist, or that we're not allowed to exist as we are, then our Action Taker will be wounded and this energy will show up in unconscious shadowy ways that we don't really understand.

If we have a sense that we don't exist then we may expand or 'inflate' to try and prove that we really *do* exist. We may pick battles just so that we can get a sense of fighting and winning. We may enjoy meeting someone and pushing up against their boundaries just so we can feel ourselves as 'real'. For if we can affect another person then we are confirming to ourselves that we do really exist.

We may be argumentative and combative just to get a sense of self. Alternatively we may work very hard, and try to prove that we exist by achieving something and having an impact on the world. We might hold very tight boundaries and be inflexible, 'stonewalling' others and not listening to their opinions, thoughts and feelings. We may 'flatten' others with the

strength of our opinions and our need to be 'right', to be 'the winner'. At worst we can be bullying and abusive in our forcefulness.

Another possible reaction is to seek a clear identity by 'bigging ourselves up'; driving a high end car, having a loud stereo, adorning ourselves with expensive branded goods, aligning ourselves with successful teams or T.V. personalities, or assuming an identity that impacts others – formidable boss, gang leader and such like.

If our Action Taker is wounded then our anger, one way or another, will have gone into shadow. We will have decided at some point in our lives that our anger was dangerous, either to ourselves or others, or that it didn't serve us in some way. When anger is repressed into shadow, its energy does not simply go away. As Robert Bly memorably said, emotions put into shadow 'de-evolve towards barbarism'. The anger simmers away just below the surface. So when repressed anger does emerge, perhaps under intense provocation or stress, it may come out as rage, unexpectedly, out of control, and doing far more damage than anger expressed cleanly could ever do. When anger inflates in shadow, it may emerge as sudden violence against other people, or in what we call 'fits of rage'.

Another reaction to the message that we don't exist could be to totally deflate. We absolutely believe in our lack of presence, power and potency. In fact, we have no sense that life could ever be any other way. We don't even try to protect ourselves, and we may allow ourselves to be walked over as we accommodate others' invasions, insults, abuse and denigration to our own detriment. We may become a martyr to others and feel like a victim. If we believe we have no power, we may not keep our commitments – either to ourselves or to others – and people will probably think of us as 'flakey'. We may avoid conflict. We have probably formed the belief that we don't need anger, or that we don't have anger, or that anger is bad or undesirable. But really, our anger goes underground, and because we are not expressing it in 'clean', 'clear' ways, it comes out in passive-aggressive or manipulative behaviours that can be infuriating to those around us and damaging to our

relationships. Deflated anger may also emerge as sudden violence, though it is usually directed at objects rather than people.

Speech patterns of the Action Taker

Someone with a healthy Action Taker will clearly and firmly set boundaries and let others know when something is not OK. This is done without any sense of blame or need to punish. It is simply a clear statement of what's not OK.

'It is not OK with me that...' or 'It doesn't work for me when...'

Someone with a wounded Action Taker will find it hard to make such statements. They will find endless disempowering thoughts coming into their head, such as: 'They're not meaning to be unkind. They can't help it. We've been friends for ages. They'll be so upset. They might not take any notice. They might get angry. I might make things worse. It's not a big deal. I'll say something next time. It might be kinder not to mention it.' And so on. Anything to avoid confrontation!

Of course, the irony here is that this doesn't have to be seen as confrontation – it is merely being clear about one's innate right to express what is not OK. Other people can often find it very helpful when we express our boundaries clearly, although there may, of course, be other people who judge us for this. As you can see, a wounded Action Taker finds it hard to put themselves at the centre of their life and to speak from a place of potency and power.

Healing messages for the Action Taker

The messages that we need to hear in order to heal wounded Action Taker energy are:

'I see you.'

'You matter.'

‘You are important to me.’

‘You have a right to be exactly who you are.’