

The Magician (Transformer)

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This article gives an introduction to the Magician archetype. The Magician is an aspect of ourselves that we all have inside us. However, as shadows form in our early life, many of us lose touch with the transformational qualities of this side of ourselves.

Recently I have begun to re-name this archetype the Transformer. It speaks to me in a slightly different way to the word Magician, and is also more gender neutral. I like each, but in this article I have chosen to use the term Transformer. You are welcome to replace this with the word Magician 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 Transformer archetype

Having perspective and seeing clearly

Our Transformer is the part of us that is able to see everything clearly and with neutrality. This is the side of us that can step back and get perspective. Our Transformer has the ability to reserve judgement and to see things from many different points of view. From this stepped-back position they can generate new options for us and can reframe situations so we can see them differently.

The Transformer is not attached to any particular way of seeing things or any particular outcome. This part of us is dispassionate and lacks the warmth and morality of the Heart Centred Leader. However, this lack of attachment is necessary in order to allow us to see things in a different light and thereby change our thinking.

Bringing about transformation

The role of the Transformer is, as the name suggests, to bring about transformation in our lives. The ultimate form of 'seeing things differently' is to experience a complete paradigm shift, where we see our whole life experience from a different point of view. Our thinking – and the way we live our lives – is then transformed.

In Healing The Shadow work the type of healing that we aim for with our clients is not simply to achieve the absence of any previous pain or struggle, it is to bring about a transformation of the way people see themselves and the way they experience their lives and what is possible for them. Some people might see this as a shift to a higher level of thinking or some kind of spiritual or personal evolution.

Transformation can come about in mystical or magical ways. Sometimes it comes as a flash of inspiration or sudden insight, the cause of which we cannot pinpoint exactly. Hence a common name for this archetype has historically been 'The Magician'. Alternatively transformation can come about as a result of taking a series of clear, rigorous steps that produce, at the end, something that appears quite magical. The development of the internet might be a good example of this.

Generally we believe a mixture of these various aspects of the Transformer is the most effective. For example, in a Healing The Shadow process we follow a series of well-defined and prepared steps which often bring about sudden and sometimes unexpected results. We see both the 'recipe' from which the

Transformer starts, and the 'magical' moments of transformation, as going hand-in-hand.

The intellect

Our Transformer resides in our mind and is very closely associated with left brain thinking and processing. This side of us is intelligent, clear-headed, precise and relentless in detail. The Transformer relishes an intellectual challenge and leaves no stone unturned in finding ingenious solutions to problems and generating new ways forward.

Due to the lack of morality of the Transformer, these gifts and what they create can be used for 'good' or 'ill'. The Transformer is equally content developing an atomic bomb, a cure for cancer, a space probe or new safety equipment. Within each of us, our Transformer needs the guidance of our Heart Centred Leader if we are to channel our gifts in a way which serves our overall vision and helps us tread the path we wish to take in life.

Protection – The Safety Officer

Our Transformer plays a particularly crucial role in childhood where it helps to protect us and keep us safe. The part of the Transformer that takes this role plays such an important part in our lives that we give it a special name – The Safety Officer.

The Safety Officer constantly scans around for danger. They need to do this, particularly in childhood, as we are small and extremely vulnerable and unable to physically or emotionally look after ourselves or stand up for ourselves effectively. The Safety Officer scans our environment for danger so that they can warn us when we need to take preventative action. They learn what kind of situations might spell danger for us, and are highly attuned to the finer nuances of these during our childhood and later in life.

Once they identify such situations they then work out the best strategy for us to employ for our survival. The 'fight or flight' responses of the Action Taker are usually not an option for us as children. How could a child fight the adults around them, when they are so much bigger and more powerful than they are? Where would a child flee to? Children all need to rely on their Transformer archetype to come up with other options, and the part we call the Safety Officer is extremely good at this.

Such options may be:

- To go quiet.
- To hide.
- To be very still.
- To cry.
- Not to cry.
- To appease and please.
- To 'be good'.
- To 'zone out'.
- To pretend to be happy.
- To pretend to be sad.
- To pretend to be frightened.
- To excel at something.
- To fail at something.
- To take a particular person's side.

...and a myriad of other often quite complex strategies. As children, we tend to employ whatever strategy the Safety Officer concludes, from their assessment of the situation, will be safest for us. There is no morality in the Safety Officer as they struggle for our physical and emotional survival. Safety is the only goal. They may advise us to steal, to lie, to be duplicitous, to blame or frame others, and more.

The Safety Officer uses Transformer skills for working out which situations are dangerous; then they think very quickly, seeing all the options available,

before generating the best possible solutions for us. They then become very attached to scanning for the particular threats they have identified and using the particular strategies they have devised. They will relentlessly and tirelessly work for our safety, whatever it takes. Often our Safety Officer will continue to do this for many years, even long after the threat has diminished or disappeared.

The Safety Officer will also generate beliefs about us to keep us safe:

- I am a naturally quiet person.
- I am always helpful and loving.
- I am a naughty boy.
- I was born with something wrong with me.
- Everything is always my fault.
- I'm stupid and useless.
- I am not a likeable person.
- I'm better than anyone else around here.
- I am not an interesting person.
- These people don't deserve me.
- I'm the only one around here who can sort things out.
- I'm responsible for everything.

...and so on, ad infinitum. They will hold tightly to these beliefs, not because they are true, but because believing them will help us adopt the most appropriate behaviour to maintain safety within the particular family environment in which we are being raised.

The element of air

We find that the element of air is a good representation of the Transformer archetype. The Transformer rises up and has perspective, as if suspended high up in the air. From here they can see clearly. We think of our mind as being able to 'take flight' in a way that the rest of our body cannot.

The 'magical' nature of the Transformer can also be represented by air imagery. Things magically 'vanish into thin air'. Magicians fly in the air on magic carpets, witches fly in the air on their broomsticks.

Animal instinct

Within each of the archetypes lies an innate animal instinct. This is, we believe, the instinct from which this whole part of ourselves was developed. In the Transformer archetype this is the instinct of survival. Here we are talking about very immediate survival – 'It's you or it's me.'

This is typified in the predator/prey dynamic. We carry within us the instinct to predate, and we also carry within us the instinctive fear of being predated upon, and the behaviours necessary to avoid this threat.

We are hard-wired to be predators. We are capable of killing other living creatures to fulfil our own needs. Indeed, our survival, in the past at least, depended on this. We are hard-wired to employ the qualities of the Transformer to predate on other creatures in this way. For example, we need to make use of our ability to be dispassionate – we will not be able to follow through on what we need to do if we feel compassion for the creatures we hunt. We also need to use our intellect, cunning and logic to entrap our prey; this is all the territory of the Transformer. The basic premise here is 'My survival depends on me destroying you'. There is no middle way; there is no place for negotiation; we can't both survive.

Most of us don't wish to be seen as a predator. It's a term that is generally used in a derogatory way in our society. However, we all have this instinct within us, and getting to know it will serve us better than putting it into shadow. Once we know our internal predator, we can make a conscious choice whether or not to act from this place.

Similarly we are hard-wired as prey. We carry the instinct to look out and to scan the environment for danger. We instinctively know how to hide, or to

camouflage ourselves to avoid detection. It is important to get to know this part of ourselves that fears attack. That way we can gain conscious control over these behaviours and come to understand when it might be appropriate to behave in these ways, and when it might not serve us.

Key emotion – fear

Fear is the emotion that opens the door to a healthy and vibrant connection with our Transformer. We need to be willing to face and feel our fear, and yet not be overwhelmed or paralysed by it, if we are to have access to the insights and transformation that our Transformer has to offer us.

For many of us, facing our deepest fears is no small task. We either ‘go for it’ and face our fear, or we live in a place of denial and avoidance – there is little middle ground. This is one reason the Transformer archetype tends to see things as ‘black or white’. We are either in the light or in the dark, we see or don’t see, we are enlightened or ignorant, we are in heaven or in hell.

Given the level and extent of traumatic fear that high numbers of us experience in our childhood it is easy for this archetype to remain ‘in the dark’ for a whole lifetime. Without the necessary support and guidance, many people find that allowing themselves to finally feel and process the terror of their childhood experiences simply remains too daunting a task.

Wounding message

There is one message which particularly harms our ability to embody our Transformer in a healthy way: this is the message that we are bad.

If we have received the message that we are ‘bad’ in some way – that we are irredeemably, fundamentally flawed – our Transformer energy will be wounded. We will fear other people seeing this ‘badness’ in us and our Transformer will spend their time trying to make sure that no-one else finds

out 'what we're really like'. This leaves little time to perform other Transformer duties.

The terms 'bad', 'badness' and 'what we're really like' are in quotation marks because it's important to remember these are perceptions on the part of the individual concerned. They are beliefs taken on during childhood to protect us in some way and help us survive. In Healing The Shadow work we don't believe that anyone is totally or irredeemably bad or evil, although of course people may do bad things.

There is one very common way that this 'badness' wound gets created, and it is worth explaining this in detail here. This 'badness' wound commonly occurs due to a particular reframe that the Transformer might make when a child is experiencing trauma, particularly if he or she is being seriously abused, be that physically, sexually or emotionally.

First, the child's Transformer steps back and looks at what's happening from a distance. They see somebody doing something bad to the child. However, that is too scary for them to take on as a reality, especially if the child is utterly dependent on the person who's being 'bad'. So their Transformer will find a way to look at the situation differently. It's very common for the Transformer to reframe what is happening by having the child conclude: 'No. That person is not bad. *I'm* bad. *I've* done something very bad and that's why this is happening to me.' This is another way of seeing the situation. It's actually not true, but the child's Transformer will choose to interpret things that way because the child then feels safer.

The child feels safer because if *they* are doing something bad then they have some power in the situation: they can try to stop being bad. This shift of perception gives the child some sense of control over what's happening to them; the child is able to believe that if they can change their behaviour, then they might be able to stop the abuse from happening.

However, if the child sees what's happening as someone else just being bad towards them for no reason, then they have to see that they have *no control* over the situation at all, and this is just too terrifying. This is an example of the very clever, very contorted kind of thinking of which the Transformer is capable.

Many of us find that we've believed this kind of lie about ourselves from childhood, and we grow up believing that we're bad or dysfunctional or wrong in some way. Actually it's just our Transformer playing a very clever trick on us – not to harm us, but to help us survive by keeping us psychologically safe.

Another way of looking at what happens here (derived from the Feeling Body trauma theory, which explains how trauma is stored in our bodies) is that the 'badness' that the child has experienced, in the form of the bad feelings they experience in their body, *does* indeed now actually live inside them. The terror response lives in their bodies, and they are now capable of terrorising themselves with these feelings without the need for any 'bad' outside stimulus.

Shadows

In response to believing the message that we are 'bad' in some way, we may inflate our Transformer energy and become extremely adept at hiding anything we fear may be 'bad' in ourselves. We watch ourselves constantly to see if we are getting anything wrong, and we control our behaviour minutely to ensure that no 'badness' slips out.

Of course, because it is not true that we are bad (this is just a lie that we took on to help us survive a very frightening situation), we are in an impossible situation: trying to hide a side of ourselves that doesn't actually exist. We will never be able to relax and feel we have achieved this; we will always fear that this unidentifiable 'badness' could surprise us and sneak out at any moment if we don't remain on high alert.

This can lead to perfectionism and hyper vigilance. We can be constantly 'overthinking' and trying desperately to work out what we might have done wrong and what steps we can take to avoid doing it again.

Our fear that we are bad can cause the healthy predator part of us to go into overdrive. They desperately look for someone to sacrifice in our place. They become a 'Persecutor'. Our Persecutor is willing to finish off another person, and will do this with relish. They will destroy colleagues, friends, partners, even our own children, with energy and enthusiasm. This is survival – it's me or you. That dynamic makes our Persecutor a very powerful energy when it's in full force: it overtakes us, and there is no other energy that can match it. We project our feared badness onto others and then we attempt to destroy it.

At its worst this can escalate to the most horrific forms of abuse: sexual abuse, torture, humiliation and degradation. Such a Persecutor doesn't see others as human, and appears to have lost touch with any sense of compassion or human decency.

Unfortunately, this Persecutor energy can also act out in our own inner world. Our Persecutor will mercilessly criticise and hate us in an attempt to annihilate the 'badness' that lives inside us once and for all. They are willing to sacrifice any part of us – our liveliness, our aspirations, our assertiveness, our tenderness – they will do anything that's necessary in order for us not to be seen as 'bad'.

At the other end of the spectrum, in contrast to such high intensity reactions to the belief that we are 'bad', we may deflate our Transformer side. We go completely the other way and block *any* seeing or knowing. We become dense, fogged, and unable to work anything out. We don't want to see the truth that we fear, so we hide it from ourselves. We can't see our options or make decisions. Our Transformer seems to have shut down completely, but in reality they have shut us down to try to protect us from seeing something which is too scary to see.

We may 'space out'. We may live in a make-believe alternative reality, or inhabit other worlds. Others may see us as 'living on another planet' or 'dense'. Many children fail at school because their Transformer has shut them down in this way and they are unable to process information. They are not 'thick', but simply shut down as a response to deep trauma of some kind.

Speech patterns of the Transformer

The Transformer assesses every situation and makes judgements about it. These are not 'facts' but are 'best guesses' based on our previous experiences. Our healthy Transformer can offer us these judgements without attachment, and can own that they are not necessarily the truth. We can then share these openly and cleanly with others. For example, if a friend tells us that she is very busy at the moment we might make a judgement that she won't have time to meet up for our weekly Thursday night drink. We might say:

'Gemma, when you said you were very busy at work I started to think that maybe you'd rather not go out for our usual drink on Thursday. I just thought I'd check in case you need that time free to work.'

This is open and clear communication in which we are owning our 'best guesses' as just that, and leaving the other person space to refute them or agree with them.

If our Safety Officer is still active from childhood, and is in overdrive to protect us from threats that largely no longer exist, then many of these 'best guesses' can be way off the mark.

A man looks at a woman on the bus. She may guess:

- *He fancies me, he might rape me.*
- *He's looking at my expensive new bag – he's going to rob me.*

- *He thinks I'm ugly, he's mocking me.*
- *He thinks I'm pretty, he's going to overwhelm me with attention.*
- *He thinks I'm stupid, he's going to shame me.*
- *He hates me, he might hit me.*

And so the list goes on. All these 'judgements' could be made by different people based on the same look from the same man.

Our Safety Officer will not easily let such judgements go. They are very attached to protecting us no matter what the cost. The more we are forewarned of possible threats, the better chance we have of taking some preventative action. Because of this attachment to protecting us they are likely to see these judgements as 'the truth', rather than just as a 'best guess'.

So they will say things like:

- *'I just knew that man wanted to steal my wallet.'*
- *'I can tell you don't want to meet for a drink this week.'*
- *'You've never respected me.'*

And so on. They will make judgments and speak as if their fears and fantasies are the truth and will not allow anyone else the space to refute them.

Healing messages for the Transformer archetype

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

'You're innocent.'

'You've done nothing wrong.'

'You were born good, but people have lied to you and told you that you're bad.'

'You're still good and always have been, even if you've done some bad things.'
