

“From Survival to Collaboration”

What are we capable of when filled with fear? What can we achieve when threatened? If we take a serious look at our lives, we will recall moments when we felt threatened and figured out what to do under those extreme circumstances. The survival instinct is universal and one of the most potent and reactive forces that preserve our lives. It is our fight or flight response. Instinctively, each moment is assessed for its potential threat to our survival. When danger is perceived, cooperation and productivity are not essential. What is critical is survival.

What is a threat to one person might not be to another. Nevertheless, there are general conditions for employees in organizations that can feel perilous, like significant changes in leadership, restructuring of the company, a sharp decline in sales, the loss of a patent, re-engineering of processes, unexpected growth of the competition, new and more complex standards of operation, rumors about closings or sale of the company, and so on.

Four archetypal drives get energized and will show up when we need to survive, and Caroline Myss asserted to call them survival archetypes: The Victim, Saboteur, Prostitute, and Wounded Child. They are behavioral patterns learned in the early stages of our development in a time when our power felt too little compared to the power that our parents, siblings, teachers, and many other people had around us.

The Victim archetype is about worthiness and control. The Victim relates to experiences where we couldn't defend ourselves or defend what we considered fair and just in disempowering situations with someone or something. This Victim pattern of archetypal behavior is related to feelings of frustration, anger, and humiliation.

The Saboteur archetype is the energy that undermines our empowerment and directs our choices. It is related to unconscious acts where we look to avoid something because we think we aren't ready to deal with it or because we believe we will fail. Not feeling worthy or good enough is a root argument of this archetype.

The Prostitute archetype is related to situations where to survive; we feel the need to compromise something precious to us. We feel forced into pawning or jeopardizing aspects of ourselves—our sincerity, our integrity, our loyalty—against our fundamental, core values.

The archetype of the Wounded Child holds memories of a traumatic past. It is impossible to completely mature all areas of our personality in our developmental process, leading to this behavior pattern. We understand maturity as the ability to respond as adults all the time—autonomously, consciously, and responsibly. On the other hand, immaturity stems from parts of ourselves that are not fully developed and matured; as a result, we continue to act like children. When we confront situations related to areas of immaturity, we exhibit childish behavior.

Consider if your team or organization presents any of the following symptoms:

- The atmosphere is full of complaints and excuses, especially when it's time to review questions of accountability.
- Staff members feel incapable of reaching their goals.
- People tend to isolate themselves and work in silos most of the time.
- Someone else is always responsible. A tendency to "pass the buck," blame, and point the finger prevails.
- A palpable underlying hostility fills the air.
- Temper tantrums, explosiveness, rage, drama, and manipulation are commonly observed behaviors.

If these symptoms are familiar to you and are robbing the effectiveness of your team or organization, survival archetypes have taken control and will not give up without a fight.

Let me share with you how the human resources team of Boehringer Ingelheim applied a program working on four archetypal paths: The Warrior Path, The Wizard Path, The Father Path, and The Self-Love Path, to breakthrough the survival spell they were caught on and how they emerged as an empowered team.

Business Case:

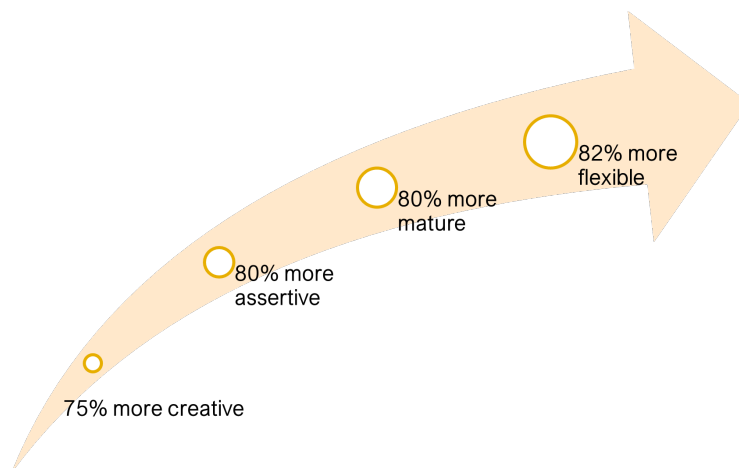
Boehringer Ingelheim Human Resources team members were going through a hard time. A leader with a very hierarchical old-school leadership style had continuously mistreated them by belittling any effort, proposal, or work they attempted to implement. As a result, they all lost confidence and started retreating unconsciously into a survival state, exhibiting undesired behaviors such as blaming, finger pointing, gossiping, disempowerment, sabotage, tantrums, and silo mentality. The company finally removed this leader, but when his replacement came into the role, he asserted to hire a consultant (who happened to be me) to facilitate a healing process for this wounded team exhibiting a toxic dynamic.

The program that was approved for the team to go through took them through the following steps:

- I conducted **one-to-one interviews** with each team member, opening a secure space for them to release the emotional baggage they were carrying. This helped me to build trust and created a solid bond between us.
- They all went through a **workshop** where they understood what an archetype was, how archetypes express themselves consciously or not, for good or bad, and the importance of owning and guiding them. We put a lot of roleplaying, humor, and even drama so they could mirror each other in their lights and shadow behaviors.

- I facilitated a **coaching process** for each team member where they validated their archetypal findings and worked with me on four archetypal paths:
 - The Path of the Warrior:** Moving from victimhood, complaining, and looking for culprits abroad to co-responsibility, self-confidence, and taking the initiative.
 - The Path of Self Love:** Abandon the tendency to transgress and be resentful of oneself and others in favor of being assertive, congruent, and guided by values.
 - The Path of the Father:** Leave behind behaviors of immaturity, reactivity, and low emotional intelligence in favor of emotional management that fosters maturity and stability.
 - The Path of the Wizard:** Leaving the comfort zone and the fear of change to go towards recursion, innovation, and creativity.
- In some cases, where their relationships were stuck at a dead end, **conflict mediation sessions** between those archetypes that could not find common ground were facilitated. These helped them build empathy and understanding and reach common agreements on how they would like to work together.

After six months of hard work and with the new leader's support, empathy, and understanding, a new healthy and productive dynamic emerged among them. The results were just fantastic; they became:



More on how to use the archetypal paths can be found in chapters three, four, and five of my book Exponential Engagement “How to ignite passion and productivity in the workplace through the wisdom of archetypes.” You can purchase it from amazon https://www.amazon.com/Exponential-Engagement-productivity-workplace-archetypes-ebook/dp/B09Y8LXJKZ/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=

Want to know more about how to empower, enable and encourage your team and organization following the archetypal paths? Schedule a free 30-minute interview with me, and let us discuss it.

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