

Myth-Spotting



Myth-Spotting is a way to use Brainspotting within a Jungian framework. Myth spotting uses universal timeless narratives to access unresolved primal and developmental fears. All Brainspotting prompts are methods to help the patient “find the frame” that allows them to access the subcortical brain. In this prompt the frame is found in archetypal stories and images.

Myth-Spotting uses our natural affinity for story to help us activate, confront and challenge unresolved fears. Mythology often represents places in the hero's journey where we become stuck in development. Mythology is an intuitive and felt form of storytelling that describes archetypal concepts from the unconscious. Using Mythology, art, or storytelling as a frame for brainspotting allows clients to activate chthonic fears without the shame and guilt of addressing personal narratives.

This worksheet is not to be used as a script. Instead it is a way to help clients tap into the emotional energy of a somatic or unconscious trauma they want to process even if they are unable or unwilling to remember the event. Myth spotting is a way of talking around the trauma by connecting to the universal archetypal experience many traumas represent. Patients may find it easier to feel the physical reaction connected to an image, myth or story fragment that makes their experience more universal. Myths spotting allows clients the ability to connect with the energy of a trauma without revisiting the details. .

Archetypal Images

A deep dark hole that absorbs everything with no bottom. Imagine its vastness, emptiness and indifferent void like hunger.


Imagine a hand struggling to grasp others in a crowd with no luck. Imagine it frantically grasping at hands as the passing crowd pulls off and flicks it away as it becomes more desperate.

Imagine a small baby howling alone in a room with no one coming to help it. It screams louder and no one can hear it.

Imagine a beautiful old castle covered in vines. You can tell it was once strong and vibrant. Now it is crumbling.

Art and Literature:

Clients are encouraged to bring in works of literature or art they find particularly affecting. For literature this might be a children's book novel excerpt, line from a religious text or part



of their own writing. For art patients can bring in something with complexity they find affecting. Art and literature that is solely comforting are not usually activating enough to open a brainspot. Instead clients should bring in works they find “relevant” to what they want to work on.

Clients may not know exactly what the psyche is chewing on or cannot put into words why a particular work is important. Brainspotting is targeting a part of the brain beneath language and the most important aspects of art are too. In the same way that we do not always know intellectually what we feel during brainspotting we also cannot know intellectually where archetypal art comes from.

In the same way that art can lead us into brainspotting processing, brainspotting can lead to the creativity that lets us tune in to the artistic process. Many writers and artists that feel stifled, conflicted or blocked can use the energy of the block to lead them into brainspotting processing that can confront and unblock the barrier. Other writers or artists sometimes find works they create distressing or overwhelming and can bring them in for processing. In Jungian and art therapies patients and practitioners can hit a wall trying to interpret the meaning of some works of art. Using the image as a jumping off point, myth spotting can help a patient access and integrate something they may not be able to consciously verbalize.

Myths

Reading these or other myths may open the door into brainspotting processing.


The Myth of Cassandra:

Theme: Isolation, inability to speak, inability to be heard, seeing danger without being able to warn or protect others, intuition

Shadow Aspect:

The myth of Cassandra is a tragic tale from Greek mythology that tells the story of a woman cursed with the gift of prophecy but doomed never to be believed.

Cassandra was the daughter of King Priam and Queen Hecuba of Troy. As a child, she was blessed by the god Apollo, who granted her the power of prophecy. However, when Cassandra refused Apollo's romantic advances, he placed a curse on her that ensured no one would ever believe her prophecies.



As Troy was preparing for war with the Greeks, Cassandra warned her family and fellow Trojans of the impending danger. She foresaw the fall of Troy and the death of her family, but her warnings were dismissed as the ravings of a madwoman.

Despite her best efforts, Cassandra's warnings went unheeded, and Troy was ultimately destroyed by the Greeks. Cassandra's family was killed, and she was taken as a prize of war by the Greek king Agamemnon.

Cassandra's curse continued to haunt her even after Troy's fall. She foretold the murder of Agamemnon and his wife Clytemnestra by their own son Orestes, but her warnings were again ignored. When the prophecy came true, Cassandra was put to death by Clytemnestra in retaliation.

Cassandra's tragic fate serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of hubris and the consequences of ignoring the warnings of others. Despite her gift of prophecy, she was powerless to prevent her own downfall and that of her people.

Framing: Posture, Energy, Texture, Soma

The Myth of Chiron:

Theme: Wounded healers, chronic pain, caregiver exhaustion, burnout, doing for others what no one can/will do for you


Shadow Aspect:

The myth of Chiron is a tale from Greek mythology that tells the story of a wise centaur who was known for his skill in hunting, medicine, music, and teaching.

Chiron was the son of the Titan Cronus and the sea nymph Philyra. He was born as a half-man and half-horse, known as a centaur. Unlike other centaurs who were wild and untamed, Chiron was kind, gentle, and wise. He was trained by the gods Apollo and Artemis and became a master of hunting, archery, and medicine.

Chiron had a wound from an arrow covered in hydras blood. It caused him deep and profound pain but he was immortal and could not die. The pain he felt allowed him to learn about healing and relieving suffering.

Chiron's reputation as a great healer and teacher brought him many pupils, including the heroes Achilles, Jason, and Hercules. He taught them the art of war, the secrets of nature, and the healing powers of herbs. Chiron was so revered that he became known as the wisest of all the centaurs.



Chiron could heal others but not himself. Chiron's pain was what allowed him to heal others. He gave others the medicine he needed but never found medicine for himself. Despite healing others Chiron never found anyone who could heal him.

The Myth of the Fall from the Garden of Eden:

Theme: individuation, accepting subjectivity, aging, memory, identity, isolation, coping with limitation, grief

Shadow Aspect:

The Myth of the Fall from the Garden of Eden is a story from the Abrahamic religions, including Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It tells the story of Adam and Eve, the first man and woman created by God, and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden.

According to the myth, God created Adam from the dust of the earth and Eve from one of Adam's ribs. He placed them in the Garden of Eden, a paradise filled with all kinds of fruits and trees. God told them they could eat from any tree in the garden except for the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, warning them that if they did, they would surely die.

One day, Eve was tempted by a serpent to eat from the forbidden tree, and she convinced Adam to do the same. As a result, they gained knowledge of good and evil, and their eyes were opened to their nakedness. When God found out, he cursed them and the serpent. He expelled them from the Garden of Eden and forbade them from ever returning.


The Fall from the Garden of Eden is often interpreted as a metaphor for the origin of sin and humanity's separation from God. It represents the consequences of disobedience and the importance of free will. Adam and Eve's decision to eat from the forbidden fruit led to their expulsion from paradise and the beginning of human suffering and mortality.

The Myth of Persephone:

Themes: death, rebirth, compromise, loss, grief, women confronting the masculine aspect,

Shadow Aspect:

The myth of Persephone is an ancient Greek story that tells the tale of the daughter of the goddess of agriculture, Demeter. According to the myth, Persephone was abducted by Hades, the god of the underworld, while she was gathering flowers in a meadow. Demeter was so grief-stricken by her daughter's disappearance that she refused to allow the crops to grow, causing famine and hardship throughout the land. Eventually, Zeus intervened and ordered Hades to return Persephone to her mother, but not before she had eaten a pomegranate seed, which bound her to the underworld for a portion of each year. The pomegranate is a symbol



associated with rebirth in the Greek tradition and adopted by Christianity as a symbol for Christ. The seeds of the pomegranate look like drops of blood but bring new life.

From a Jungian perspective, the myth of Persephone can be interpreted as a symbol of the journey of the psyche, particularly the journey of the feminine psyche. In this interpretation, Persephone represents the feminine aspect of the psyche, while Demeter represents the nurturing mother archetype. Hades, meanwhile, represents the shadow aspect of the psyche, which contains all the aspects of ourselves that we repress or deny.

The abduction of Persephone by Hades can be seen as a metaphor for the descent of the psyche into the underworld, where it confronts its shadow self. The shadow self is represented by Hades, who is often portrayed as a dark and terrifying figure. The pomegranate seed that Persephone eats can be interpreted as a symbol of the shadow's hold on the psyche, which cannot be completely overcome. Instead, it is a part of the self that must be integrated and accepted.

Persephone's time in the underworld can be seen as a period of darkness and transformation, during which she confronts her shadow self and gains wisdom and understanding. When she returns to the world above, she brings this newfound wisdom with her, and she is no longer the innocent maiden she once was. Instead, she has become a powerful queen, able to reign over both the light and dark aspects of herself.

The myth of Persephone can be seen as a powerful metaphor for the journey of the psyche, particularly the journey of the feminine psyche. It shows us that we must confront our shadow selves in order to gain wisdom and understanding, and that this process is often painful but ultimately transformative.

BYO Art, Image, Story