**Destroyer Archetype – Seeing & Acting Upon It**

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The Destroyer archetype is the story of endings, of closure, of cutting loose, letting go and plowing under. From the ability of throwing out old magazines and memorabilia to terminating employees and ending failed relationships, the terminating energy of the Destroyer’s story is balanced by the creativity of the Creator archetype. But nothing can be created—nothing can begin, without our also acknowledging endings, and it is endings that the Destroyer story frames and enables.

While Destroyer energy can be circumstantial for many of us—awakened by something in our lives that must end or that has ended—some of us are inherently driven by a desire to reform the wrongs we perceive in the world and to support radical thinking and actions about what needs to happen next. For them, this energy is sustained well beyond an ending itself and fuels a capacity to break through the limitations around them that tend to hold others back. The positive and/or well developed Destroyer story contributes many things to individuals:

* Closure—bringing an end to projects that have completed; to relationships that are not working; or to an effort that has run its course.
* The ability to see, understand and bring about endings or even destruction (to a routine, a habit, an approach, a relationship). The first step in change is being able to throw out and turn the page on the old.
* Comfort with unconventional ideas and thinking
* Capacity to challenge the status quo, troubleshoot “defects” in the current way of doing things, and to break rules in the service of higher values

The Destroyer story contributes positively to groups and organizations as well:

* The Destroyer organizations are effective at closing up and moving on—tasks, projects and people.
* The Destroyer story allows groups and teams to take stock quickly and unsympathetically and to come to closure decisively—and then move on without baggage or residue.
* Organizations that are deeply attached to this archetypal energy are able to take risks without a lot of fear or angst, and to develop truly cutting edge ideas and approaches that set conventional thinking on its ear.
* They may also be adept at improving things that don’t work well or noticing ways to break out of current problems and situations.

The negative and/or poorly developed Destroyer story also plays in individuals:

* When overdone, the Destroyer narrative appears:
  + harsh and mean—unsympathetic and/or heartless
  + withdrawn and un-collaborative, or sometimes so non-conforming that they don’t fit in anywhere
  + reckless or even destructive, and/or acting without much thought about consequences
* When the Destroyer story is lacking, there can be an inability or unwillingness to say “no”, to cut ties or stop—even those things that are harmful and need termination. Some people become so cautious that they can’t take any risk at all in their lives, or hear any new ideas that shake up their conventional way of thinking.

The Destroyer archetype can manifest negatively or be poorly developed within groups or organizations as well.

* When groups or organizations overdo the Destroyer archetype, the culture is often experienced as mean and unfeeling, mechanistically using then discarding the people as expendable resources.
* They can also take unnecessary risks; and in extreme cases, risk taking can descend into law breaking.
* When the Destroyer archetype is lacking, groups or organizations can be unwilling or unable to terminate anyone, change policies or approaches or allow change to ever take place. They may also be so dependent on conventional thinking that they miss critical changes in their environments or markets.

The Destroyer archetype is often feared and maligned as callous or insensitive—visions of death and destruction often accompany it. While these images certainly belong within the fabric of the Destroyer’s narrative, the Destroyer story provides many actions and motives needed for effective living and interaction. Being disconnected from this narrative means going without these benefits. Actions someone might take to access or activate the Destroyer archetype include:

* Clean out a closet or your attic, determined to throw away half (or more) of the items you come across. Strip your life free of clutter by cutting some of your “stuff” loose. Start this life purging with a closet.
* Determine a habit or routine that is not contributing to your happiness or success and craft an agenda to stop it (membership in an organization—cancel it; biting your fingernails—quit it; taking on projects you don’t want or have time for out of guilt—stop it)
* Identify a relationship that is unsatisfying or diminishing to you and end it—get the support of friends or family to help you, but get out of the relationship.
* Make a list of things you’d like to reform in the world. What needs to end before that reform can happen, and how can you contribute?
* Take in some unconventional thinking (read the biography of a revolutionary or the writings of a radical thinker)
* Question the tried and true in your life and/or your organization. What are you doing because no one has stopped to question its value?
* Consider where you avoid taking risk in your life, and how that could be holding you back. What’s one small step or risk you could take in that area?

The Destroyer archetype is a narrative of termination, closure, and even destruction. Just as any garden’s production of new crops requires first to have the existing plants mowed down and plowed under, the Creator’s story requires the Destroyer’s work to be done first. It is a mistake, however to regard the Destroyer archetype as merely a supporting player to the more important Creator. When the Destroyer’s energy is dormant or when the archetype is under-developed in someone, he can see closure and terminations made by others as harsh or brutal events.

If you are interacting with a person or group who very much identifies with the Destroyer’s story, consider the following actions to echo or align with this archetype’s energy and motives:

* Archetypes often align with each other to form deeper, more complex narratives in which we live and behave. The Destroyer archetype is often activated in combination with another—for instance:
  + Destroyer & Caregiver: Pat decides to end a toxic marriage motivated, in part, by her belief in what is best for her children
  + Destroyer & Warrior: Juan competes for work and puts the best proposal in front of a prospective client in the hopes of both winning the contract and putting his competitors out of business
  + Destroyer & Ruler: Rules of profit-driven business management dictate the most effective course of action to be eliminating an entire division of the company that has been financially unproductive. 75 people, therefore, will need to be fired.

What may look like aligning with the Destroyer narrative in these cases, may well be aligning with the narrative that is also at play:

* + Destroyer & Caregiver: Help Pat in her termination of this marriage by supporting her, her closure decision and action and tending to her kids’ needs
  + Destroyer & Warrior: Help Juan win and drive his competitors out of business by making his proposal as good as it can be
  + Destroyer & Ruler: Help implement the decision to eliminate the division by following or enacting the rules that govern the smooth running of the busisness
* To align with the Destroyer archetype:
  + cut, terminate, close, and slash and burn along side of them. Be a partner with them in their destruction/closure
  + honor the termination/closure--remember that appeals that resonate with other archetypes (rules: Ruler; personal needs: Caregiver; hopes: Innocent; trust: Caregiver/Innocent: desires: Lover; et cetera) don’t hold sway with the Destroyer
  + Help them define the higher values that Destroyer behavior is serving (so that destruction for the sake of itself doesn’t get out of hand)
  + Help establish a positive path or way forward to channel anger and frustration, and to address the problems, limitations and injustices that shape the Destroyer’s worldview
  + Introduce an opposing point of view (Destroyers love a good debate)