

EMBODYING APHRODITE – USING GODDESS ARCHETYPES TO HEAL WESTERN WOMAN’S SPLIT BETWEEN HEART, POWER AND SEXUALITY

by Kimberly Hirsch

Women in western society have long struggled to integrate their heart, power, and sexual centers to live healthier, more fulfilling lives. Even mythological goddesses who were influential archetypes for women, often displayed difficulty in integrating these three aspects. This paper will specifically explore the Greek Olympian Goddesses because of their historical prominence in western society. It will examine how these goddess archetypes evolved and became part of the collective unconscious, subtly influencing the roles as women. It will suggest methods for healers to help women reintegrate their heart, power and sexual centers to create healthier and more fulfilling lives. It will explore the benefits of therapeutic healing techniques to bring light to her shadow around power, love, and sexuality and provide guidance to embody her whole self. Just as Brennan healers learn to recognize the different psychological and energetic Reichian Characterologies in their clients, it can be equally helpful to acknowledge which archetypes are influencing our female clients in their personal process. By identifying the qualities of the goddess archetypes that exist in our clients, they can become more aware of the needs they have left unfulfilled and then make conscious choices to attend to those needs. This paper will focus on a primary example of how the Aphrodite archetype can be used for healing the Rigid characterology and will then provide a brief overview of the remaining goddesses that can be similarly embodied for healing other characterologies.

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Growing up in puritanical-based western society, women have consistently learned that embodying their heart, power, and sexuality simultaneously can be a challenging endeavor. While it is not directly to them in those exact words, women often unconsciously accept the image that they must make a choice of which of these three aspects to develop. Over time they may come to learn that by downplaying their sexuality or by suppressing their feelings, they might be taken more seriously and appear more stable. Others may learn to use their sexuality to manipulate in an effort to gain power and control. However, by choosing between these centers in order to “survive,” women are denying their ability to be more fully embodied and fulfilled. In reviewing the origins of these images around the split between the heart, sexuality, and power, it is evident that women have struggled with this for centuries. Even our mythological goddesses who were influential archetypes for women, often displayed difficulty in integrating these three aspects. This paper will examine how these goddess archetypes evolved and became part of our collective unconscious, subtly influencing our characterologies and roles as women. It will also suggest methods for healers to help women reintegrate their heart, power and sexual centers to create healthier and more fulfilling lives. It will explore the benefits of therapeutic healing techniques to bring light to her shadow around power, love, and sexuality and provide guidance to embody her whole self. Just as Brennan healers learn to recognize the different psychological and energetic characterologies in their clients, it can be equally helpful to acknowledge which archetypes are influencing our female clients in their personal process. This paper will attempt to provide male healers with even further insight into their female client’s unconscious.

In reviewing the mythological landscape of female archetypes, it is apparent that the struggle of integrating one’s heart, power, and sexual centers is deeply ingrained in our identities. When examining the goddesses, we can see that among them are archetypes that demonstrate powerful inner forces that are personifications of our most human qualities. It is these personifications that women have identified with over time and have assimilated into their being. While there are goddesses from many cultures, we will specifically explore the Greek Goddesses because of their historical prominence in western society. Of the most famous Greek goddesses, there are seven influential ‘Olympian Goddesses’ that can be divided into three categories: the virgin goddesses, the vulnerable goddesses, and the alchemical goddess. Women need to embody and express characteristics from each category of goddesses in order to ‘love deeply, work meaningfully, and be sensual and creative.’¹ However, each goddess archetype can help to heal the specific wounds and defenses carried within the Reichian Characterologies as used in the Brennan Healing Science. This paper will focus on a primary example of how one goddess archetype can be used for healing of a specific Characterology and will then provide a brief overview of the remaining Olympian Goddesses that can be similarly embodied for healing of other characterologies.

The Rigid Characterology

A common Reichian overlay character structure present among women in current western society is the Rigid Characterology. As presented by Barbara Ann Brennan², the rigid character structure experienced rejection by the parent of the opposite sex during childhood. Because children cannot yet discern between sexuality, erotic pleasure, and love, this experience felt like an ultimate betrayal of love. In order to compensate for this perceived rejection, the child assumes a ‘good girl’ personality to hide her feelings of inadequacy. By controlling her feelings that arise from this perceived betrayal (pain, rage, negative pleasure), the child instead learns to contain her feelings so that she feels immune to being hurt or humiliated. She teaches herself that she can avoid all such ‘negative emotions’ if she chooses and

learns to manipulate to get what she wants. She eventually becomes proud other ability to seemingly control her surroundings and herself, and maintains the appearance of being ambitious and superior.

However, underneath this mask of perfection and serenity lie a deep terror of betrayal and a vulnerability of being hurt. Surrender is equally frightening to the rigid character because it would mean that all the emotions that have been ‘controlled and suppressed’ would be released into the consciousness again. Typically, the rigid character lives primarily in her mind and through the use of her will. She works to maintain a perfect appearance, with a posture that suggests great pride. Her strong ego and mental facilities are used to avoid the need to let go. She walls off her inner self from the outside world and eventually forgets her inner essence altogether. The rigid character’s main issue is authenticity and her inability to feel her own divine essence. In holding back her feelings, she builds more pride around the perceived perfection and loses the ability to have genuine contact with herself or with others. Because she has learned to split her feelings off from her consciousness to avoid feeling the potential pain of betrayal by her partner, she engages in sex with an attitude of contempt rather than love. The rigid character has learned to seduce for sex and love, but only on her terms – without true communion and without becoming committed. She chooses sex over love because it is less threatening, yet she is not satisfied in the long run. She is in a challenging situation because to surrender would mean getting hurt and to remain proud and without feeling is an empty existence.

In the healing room, a Brennan healer will usually work with a client with a rigid character structure to soften her energy field. The healer will help the client open her heart chakra to connect with her love, as well as other emotions. The second layer of the energy field will be charged and its activity brought more fully into the client’s consciousness over a period of time. The client needs to open her feeling center and allow her feelings to flow throughout her field – as well as to be seen by and shared with others. As she does so, she must become more aware of her shadow and lower self aspects before she can completely access her core essence. Eventually, the deeper core essence of the client’s personality is identified and embodied more fully. During this process, the healer also helps the client reconnect her heart with her sexuality/genitals so that she can learn to experience loving, intimate relationships without the emotional distancing that comes from contempt. These techniques help the client to feel her own uniqueness and authenticity. Once the client remembers her core essence, she can feel her own higher self attributes, such as her great sense of adventure, passion for life, and ability to inspire others with her love. She has the ability to radiate core essence into all areas of her life, is a natural leader in whatever areas of interest she desires, and can enjoy life to its fullest. In addition to the standard Brennan Healing Science techniques employed to initiate a healing process for the rigid character structure, the healer may intentionally invoke the archetype of the goddess Aphrodite to aid in this healing response.

The Alchemical Goddess: Aphrodite (Goddess of Love and Beauty)

Asarte, Ishtar, Inanna, Isis, Lakshmi, Shakti, Devi, Parvati, Yemaja and Yemanja, Erzulie, and Huitica. These are just some of the names from many cultures and centuries that invoke the enchanting, mesmerizing goddess of love and beauty.

In Western culture, we know her as Aphrodite from Greek mythology or Venus from Roman mythology. Aphrodite is known as the alchemical goddess because of her unique ability to inspire the transformative and creative power of love. She motivated women to enter relationships with passion rather than permanence and to ‘value creative process, and be open to change.’³ She was known for maintaining her autonomy similar to the virgin goddesses, but also entered into relationships like the vulnerable goddesses. Aphrodite was the most irresistible of the goddesses and ‘entered many relationships of her choosing and was never victimized.’⁴ In essence, she symbolized a balance between

the virgin and vulnerable categories, acting as a bridge between their extremes. The Aphrodite archetype maintains the most highly integrated heart, sexuality, and power of the seven Olympian goddess archetypes.

As described in literature, it seems that women embodying the alchemical goddess archetype may offer a more balanced distribution of energy flow between the emotional, will, and mental centers. Aphrodite holds the template for the lover, the muse, and the artist. On an energetic level, she has an extraordinarily brilliant energy field, including a radiant core star essence. ‘She is the golden light hidden within our bodies, the secret radiance of our flesh. Shining from within the core of our being, she seeks to make every cell of the body her own and to fill it with her luminous presence.’⁵ Her sexual and heart centers are open and connected through her core essence. The Aphrodite archetype exhibits attributes of the integrated characterologies, but might be noted that when in defense exhibits primarily schizoid qualities such as losing track of time. She also seems to exhibit a keen understanding of effortless intention and surrender. When a woman embodies the energy of the alchemical goddess she can appear charismatic, unusually attractive, and engaging. She exhibits strong, but flexible boundaries in her interactions with others and does not harbor guilt around her sexuality or boundary setting.

Aphrodite was the only Olympian goddess that fully embodied sexual energy as a sacred mystery and a guide to the depths of our inner knowing. Aphrodite reminds us that through sexual union lies the passage to sacred communion. It is the driving force for procreation – in concept and in physicality. ‘Aphrodite embodied that mysterious pull that draws all creatures toward the threshold between the worlds, the Great Gateway, where spirit enters into material form, where inspiration is received and the spark of life is transmitted. With her seductive powers and her irresistible magnetism, the goddess entices us to open to that divine spark, to become its instruments and channels, to let it stream through us, and to channel a current so strong it pushes against our edges and makes us grow larger.’⁶ By allowing her sexual energy to flow throughout her field without guilt or shame, she claimed her life force as her own. Similarly, the ancient Greeks believed that sex was a ‘universal, primordial form of sacred power.’⁷ As such, Aphrodite is known for having lived on her own terms with an open heart, sensual femininity, and internal strength. ‘Aphrodite’s beauty, joy, playfulness, magnetism, and capacity to give and receive deep, voluptuous pleasure are essential qualities of the feminine spirit.’⁸

Embodying this archetype can prove particularly healing for a woman with a rigid character structure who has a strong split between her sexuality and her heart. It is important to note that as the client with strong rigid overlay receives healing work, her superego will most likely be hyperactive with criticisms and judgments that her instincts and impulses are not appropriate. A large part of the healing process is in listening to these judgments and recognizing how her inner judge actually stifles her life force, passion, and creativity. In the process of witnessing this aspect of herself and allowing her emotional body to flow more fully, she will confront her dark side that is always present in the healing journey. It is this very ‘journey of descent into the human psyche that is a quest for wisdom. Her awareness will then encompass all dualities... as a journey of initiation into a new level of spiritual awareness and power.’⁹

Exploring Aphrodite’s Dark Side

While Aphrodite was known as the golden goddess and the shining one streaming with light, she was also worshipped as Melaina, the black one, the dark one, and the Gravedigger. As with each goddess archetype, there is always the dark aspect of the character that can also influence the personality. ‘Even as there is no light without shadow, no spring without winter, so the golden goddess cannot be without her dark side.’¹⁰ It is important to note that the dark side is also a great teacher and initiator. It is often

through the journey of descent into the metaphorical underworld of one's psyche that insight and wisdom emerges. The dark side of Aphrodite is described as 'the great mistress of nonduality, for in the depths of her dark body, all differences are erased. Until she initiates us, our outlook upon life remains dualistic: we run toward the light and fear the dark. The dark goddess teaches us how to say yes to existence in its totality; how to embrace our suffering, our rage, and our despair; how to value the dark layers on our path as much as the light-filled peaks... And since the sexual journey brings us both light and darkness, pleasure and pain, life and death, we call upon the goddess in both her golden and her dark aspects to guide us along this journey.'¹¹ As we invoke and embody the goddess archetype, it is always important to remember that we are holding both the light aspects, as well as the dark aspects, of the goddess for healing. It is by embracing the full range of the goddess' being that the client can also experience her own depth and wholeness.

Healing the Split: Embodying Aphrodite

By embodying Aphrodite in the framework of the healing process, a Rigid woman can find additional support for healing the split between her heart and sexuality. Initially, the healer can familiarize herself with the archetype so that she can embody the goddess energy so that it can be transmitted through harmonic resonance to the client's energy field. Additionally, the specific goddess energy consciousness can be called forth into the healing space to provide additional support and guidance for the healing process. By invoking Aphrodite in the healing room, the client is held in a template that helps her recognize internal and external 'imperfect' beauty and claim it as her own. Aphrodite helps the client to feel her passions, instincts, and longings, encouraging her to experience them more fully. Aphrodite inspires the client to feel that she deserves to love and be loved without shame or hesitation. Her archetype embraces the pleasure of sensuality and sexuality integrated with loving emotions – inspiring us to risk being consciously vulnerable. In doing so, the client is supported to again feel her core essence and her passion for life. She can feel the unique beauty of herself re-emerging from the depths of her being.

In this supportive environment, the healer can help the client unearth her images around sexuality, love and power. If she is only engaging in sex with contempt, then how can she move beyond the pride to include her heart in the dynamic? By lovingly creating space to explore the depths of her shadow aspects, she can learn to embrace all of herself instead of only pieces. If the client is willing to do so, she can begin to let her sexuality flow more fully in her field and explore what emotions surface when she is seen in her sexuality. She can also become more aware of the difference between being in her full power from a place of effortless intention instead of using her will and seduction to force a feeling of power. Like Aphrodite's ability to maintain healthy boundaries, the healer can help the client to create even healthier boundaries without the need for power struggles. As part of this healing response, the client will be able to connect her sexuality and her heart through her core essence to feel the divinity that exists in both areas of her being. With more healing work where the client's core essence is felt and radiated, the client will begin to feel and embody more of her own authentic self and life force. 'The Aphrodite archetype motivates women to seek intensity in relationships rather than permanence, to value creative process, and be open to change.'¹²

The client can also be encouraged to learn more about Aphrodite so that she herself can invoke the goddess energy in the form of a personal healing response. After describing the attributes of Aphrodite to the client, the healer can also provide certain recommendations to further aid the client to integrate this archetypal energy into her field. Such suggestions for the Aphrodite archetype might include: listening to her inner judge with compassionate understanding and curiosity, learning how to slow down and find the pleasure in everyday moments; pampering her body with relaxing treatments; re-

acquainting herself with her own sensuality; allowing the romantic to surface into her daily life; and, dancing with her sensuality and heart present simultaneously (first alone and then with others). The healing of this goddess archetype enables the client to experience her own ‘all-consuming passion, charisma, self-assurance, laughter, radiance, grace, and vulnerability’ in a safe environment before bringing it out into the world. It is here that she can have a visceral experience of the goddess energy archetype whose needs we have left unfulfilled for so long.

Other Olympian Goddesses

CHARACTER STRUCTURE - GODDESS ARCHETYPE CROSS REFERENCE CHART
(Assuming Character Structure is Predominant)

Key: **O** = Archetype Present Already **X** = Archetype Needs to be Strengthened

	SCHIZOID	ORAL	MASOCHIST	PSYCHOPATHIC	RIGID
ARTEMIS	X	X	X	O	O
ATHENA	X	X	X	O	O
HESTIA	O	X	O	X	X
HERA	O	O	X	X	X
DEMETER	X	O	O	X	O
PERSEPHONE	O	X	X	X	X
APRHODITE	O	X	X	O	X

Just as the Aphrodite archetype can be embodied as a healing response to the Rigid Characterology as mentioned above, so can the remaining six Olympian Goddess archetypes be invoked to aid in the healing process for other character structures. Women can learn to honor each archetype’s attributes that are present within herself as well as to cultivate other archetypes that are not yet present in her being. Women need to embody and express characteristics from each category of goddesses in order to feel truly whole. Which goddess archetype (or multiple archetypes as more than one can be present at a time) is ‘activated in any particular women at any particular time depends on the combined effect of a variety of interacting elements – the woman’s predisposition, family and culture, hormones, other people, unchosen circumstances, chosen activities, and stages of life.’¹³ When the client becomes aware of which goddess archetypes are dominant forces within her, she gains self-knowledge about the ‘strengths of certain instincts, about priorities and abilities, about the possibility of finding personal meaning through choices others might not encourage.’¹⁴ As such, it behooves healers to gain a better understanding of each goddess archetype so that we may recognize which archetype is present within each client and which archetypes need to be strengthened for a healthier balance. Below is a short summary of each archetype’s attributes and healing qualities (a chart summarizing Jungian, Reichian, and Brennan aspects of each goddess can be found at the end of the paper).

The Virgin Goddesses

The virgin goddesses included Artemis (Goddess of the Hunt and Moon), Athena (Goddess of Wisdom and Handicrafts), and Hestia (Goddess of the Hearth). These three goddesses were achievement-oriented and represented independence and self-sufficiency in women. They had an exquisite ability to focus their attention on what was personally meaningful and were extremely logical and goal-oriented. They were known for actively seeking their own goal fulfillment rather than waiting for another to do so for them. They considered emotional attachments with people to be a distraction from their goals and did not allow their consciousness to be diverted. As such, they did not value romantic relationship and were not susceptible to falling in love. They expanded our conception of the feminine to include self-sufficiency and competency.

As described in literature, it seems that women embodying the virgin goddess archetype appear to use their mental and will aspects as the major modifier, while their emotion center is the least activated

center. The virgin goddess holds the template for the warrior, the heads of state, and the high-level executive. On an energetic level, she might appear to have most energy flowing up her back and around her head, while the energy along her front is not as vibrant. Her sexual and heart centers are often repressed, while her first, fifth, sixth and seventh chakras are more open. She primarily exhibits attributes of the psychopathic, masochist, and rigid characterologies. As such, she might be likely to use such defenses as the power-will display, boundary containment, verbal arrows, mental grasp, hook, and verbal denial. An outstanding ability unique to the virgin goddess is her extraordinary command of intention and hara. When a woman embodies the energy of the virgin goddess she can appear strong, unyielding, and focused.

Artemis (Goddess of the Hunt and Moon)

*'Artemis...roamed the wilderness of forest, mountain, meadow, and glade with her band of nymphs and hunting dogs. Dressed in a short tunic, armed with a silver bow, a quiver of arrows on her back, she was the archer with unerring aim. As Goddess of the Moon, she is also shown as a light-bearer, carrying torches in her hands, or with the moon and stars surrounding her head... The stag, doe, hare, and quail all shared her elusive nature. The lioness exemplified her regality and prowess as a hunter, and the fierce boar represented her destructive aspect. The bear was an appropriate symbol for her role as protector of the young. Finally, the wild horse roamed widely with companions, as did Artemis with her nymphs.'*¹⁵

Artemis is the personification of the independent feminine spirit. Her archetype 'enables women to seek her own goals on terrain of her own choosing.'¹⁶ As a virgin goddess, she was immune to falling in love and was never victimized by man. She holds the template of a woman that can take care of herself with fierce self-confidence and a free, uncompromising spirit. She does not need masculine approval to feel whole and tends to surround herself with a sisterhood of support. Although Artemis lacked intimate, committed emotional relationships, she has many enduring, loyal brotherly and sisterly relationships with men and women. She thrives on the hunt and competition, and is known for her innate ability to concentrate intensely on whatever is important to her. She has a sharp, keen focus and is never distracted from her course. She is known for her ability to persevere and speak her truth regardless of whom it affects. She is moved by wrongs done to others and has the propensity to take action to rectify the situation. Artemis is 'driven by physical energy rather than mental... or sexual energy.'¹⁷ Her sexuality remains undeveloped and unexpressed, where relationships are considered secondary. Most often the Artemis woman feels contempt for men that show any sign of vulnerability and will not enter into intimate relationship. If she does have sex, it is usually only as recreational sport as opposed to a physical expression of emotional intimacy. If a woman embodying the Artemis archetype does indeed marry, the marriage often has egalitarian quality - one of brotherly love, rather than passion. Men that are attracted to this archetype are drawn to her strength and autonomy. The relationship commonly has an asexual, companionable essence, where he teaches her consideration and sensitivity. However, sometimes women embodying this archetype can marry men that don't support her and her self-esteem thereby suffers. The relationship can turn into a competitive relationship where the actual competition destroys the marriage.

Artemis also has a destructive aspect to her archetype. She will willfully harm others who offend her or actively threaten those under her protection. In causing others to suffer, she feels righteous and avoids taking the pain into her own being. She is usually 'angry at a man or men in general for depreciating her or for failing to treat with respect something she values.'¹⁸ She is also known for being so incredibly focused on her own goals and ambitions that she fails to notice the feelings of those around her. This emotional distancing can be a side effect to the intensity of concentration to meet her goals, but creates isolation from those who love her. She can also display attributes of ruthlessness and stubbornness to

meet her goals and has been known for being mercilessness in her ‘judgment of the actions of others in terms of unmitigated black and white.’¹⁹ It is this extreme form of judgment that allows her to feel justified in her retaliation and punishment.

In order to bring balance and healing to this archetype, she must first confront her own destructiveness directly to see how much damage it causes to others around her. She must learn to feel her own humility so that she can return to her humanity (rather than only feeling righteous and all-powerful). She needs to develop a strong sense of compassion and empathy so that she can learn to forgive others (and herself) for making mistakes. As she begins to acknowledge her vulnerabilities, she may also start to feel her own longing and need for another. If she continues to cultivate her feminine aspect (softness, receptivity, feelings toward marriage and motherhood), she may finally discover that love and trust of another special person is very precious to her. The Artemis woman can also strengthen other goddess archetypes within her to seek more balance in her being. She can strengthen her Aphrodite archetype to embody sensuality and loving intimacy, strengthen Hera to enter monogamous, loving marriage, and strengthen Demeter to get in touch with her desire for children. Similarly, if a client enters the healing room seeking help with her ‘addiction to men’ or her ‘overwhelming fear of divorce,’ Artemis herself can be strengthened to encourage embodiment of the independent spirit. The Artemis archetype is often found to be a strong influence on such character structures as Psychopathic and Rigid. This archetype can typically be strengthened in clients with predominant Schizoid, Oral, and Masochist character structures.

Athena (Goddess of Wisdom and Handicrafts)

‘Athena was a virgin goddess, dedicated to chastity and celibacy. She was the stately, beautiful warrior goddess, protector of her chosen heroes and of her namesake city, Athens. She was the only Olympian goddess portrayed wearing armor... Befitting her role as the goddess who presided over battle strategy in wartime and over domestic arts in peacetime, Athena was also shown with a spear in one hand and a bowl or spindle in the other... She was the protector of cities, patron of military forces, and goddess of weavers, goldsmiths, potters, and dressmakers...’²⁰

Athena is the archetype of ‘logical women, who are ruled by their heads rather than their hearts.’²¹ Athena women thrive in business, academic, scientific, military & political arenas. She exemplifies the woman who naturally maintains her calm and thinks on her feet in the midst of an emotional situation. She is known for being bright-eyed, shrewd, practical, uncomplicated, unselfconscious, and confident. She is adept at thinking clearly to develop solid strategies to aid in times of conflict. She can use her power of persuasion and verbal facility to affect justice and mercy for those who have been mistreated. She is a master at diplomacy and inspires courage.²² Athena ‘represents the most positive male aspects of ourselves... She gives women permission to travel in male territory without guilt, fear or anxiety... She brings mercy, wisdom, and soulfulness into the masculine world and with it the confidence that a woman is as capable as any man.’²³ The Athena woman is highly competent, hardworking, self-assured, logical, productive, and interested in the common good of any chosen organization. Because she is ruled by her head rather than her heart, she might appear to be unaffectionate, self-righteous, or even cold. She typically had little relationship with her mother, but identified primarily with her father and the masculine qualities he represents. She learned to carefully guard her more intimate side ‘under her shield’ to project her emotions and disguise her vulnerability, thereby rejected the concepts of sexuality and marriage.²⁴ Unlike Artemis, the Athena archetype revels in the company of powerful men, as long as they regard her as an equal. She can have difficulty with female friends because she can get competitive and destroy the friendship with deceptive maneuvers. Her intellectual defenses keep her from feeling her own (as well as other’s) pain. Even in conflict, she remains impervious to feeling as she ‘observes, labels, and analyzes what is going on and decides what she will do next.’²⁵ Most often

she feels little empathy for others considered to be unsuccessful, downtrodden, or rebellious. She is usually politically conservative and resists change.

Women embodying the Athena archetype usually gravitate to powerful men with authority, responsibility, and power. They seek companion-like or mentor relationships where two-way loyalty is essential. If Athena is the most prominent archetype, the woman will usually not be particularly sensual or sexy and is often celibate for long periods in her adult life. If she does marry, the communication with her husband about events is usually excellent. However, communication around feelings is virtually nonexistent.²⁶ The Athena woman needs to invoke Aphrodite or Hera as active archetypes in order for sexuality ‘to become an expression of erotic attraction or emotional commitment.’²⁷ She needs to experience her whole body (instead of just living in her head) and move down into her instinctual level, so she can feel the full strength of maternal, sexual, or procreative instincts.’ She needs to develop other aspects of herself and see how her demands for proof and her skepticism keep her distanced from others and from her ‘as-yet developed potential for spiritual or emotional depth.’²⁸ Healing for the Athena woman comes as she shows her vulnerability beyond her armoring and let go of needing to be the authority that keeps her distanced. She needs to ‘no longer sit in judgment on others, inwardly claiming authority to validate or invalidate the way other people feel or think or live. When she becomes aware that she has something to learn from people and something to share with them, and this is involved as a peer, she will have shed her’ defenses.²⁹ Only then can she realize that she had been killing off the potential for true communication where the heart could be shared. She needs to let her inner child emerge rather than approaching every new situation as a sensible adult. The healing comes when she can allow herself to play, laugh, cry, be hugged and mothered. She can also do more crafts to help herself get out of her mind. This offers an ‘inner balance to an outer-world focus.’³⁰ Similar to Artemis, the Athena archetype is often found to be a strong influence on such character structures as Psychopathic and Rigid. This archetype can typically be strengthened in clients with predominant Schizoid, Oral, and Masochist character structures.

Hestia (Goddess of the Hearth)

‘Hestia was the goddess of the fire that burns within the hearth. This fire symbolizes the inner light that burns within each of us, recharging and rekindling our spirits. In ancient Greece, the domestic hearth was regarded as a sacrificial altar to Hestia, and represented personal security, happiness, and the sacred duty of hospitality. It is Hestia’s warm and holy presence that transforms a house into a home.’³¹

Hestia is an archetype of inner centeredness. She contains the inner reference that allows a woman to feel grounded amongst chaos, disorder, and everyday bustle. With Hestia in a woman’s personality, her life has meaning.³² Hestia was known to reside in temples or houses. Her significance is found in rituals and symbolized by fire. To this day, her presence is in every house and temple and is central to everyday life. As an archetype, Hestia provides women with a sense of intactness and wholeness.³³ While Hestia shares a focused consciousness like all virgin goddesses, her archetype holds a more introspective concentration. She perceives the world by looking inward and intuitively senses what is going on. She has an innate high sense perception using many senses. Traditionally, women embodying the Hestia archetype thrive in religious communities – often as vestal virgins, nuns, in ashrams and convents. They are usually regarded as “old souls” and honored elders. Hestia women are ‘not attached to people, outcomes, possessions, prestige, or power. She feels whole as she is.’³⁴ She usually is a relatively quiet and unobtrusive woman, whose presence exudes warmth and peaceful order. While the Hestia woman has She has a tendency to withdraw from the company of others and seeks tranquility most often found in solitude, she commonly has a few good female friends who appreciate being in each other’s presence from time to time. They feel that her gift is to ‘listen with a

compassionate heart, staying centered in the midst of whatever turmoil a friend brings to her, providing a warm place by her hearth.³⁵

While sexuality is not important to the Hestia woman, it may lie dormant until intercourse is initiated at which time Aphrodite must be evoked. A Hestia wife may appear dependent and comfortable living in the traditional role. She attracts men who see themselves as the traditional head of the household and seek saintly women. As an archetype of inner wisdom, Hestia lacks negativity when centered. However, if she does not make her presence known, Hestia can be a self-effacing, anonymous non-entity who still has a central position in the household. She can be taken for granted, lose self-esteem, and eventually burn out. To grow beyond the lower self attributes of the Hestia archetype, a woman must learn to express her feelings so that people who are special to her can know it.³⁶ She first needs to be able to assess how much of herself to safely reveal to the world. She then needs to acquire an ability to be assertive -- to have an active aspect to her personality if she is going to interact with others or take care of herself in the world.³⁷ To do so, she needs to invoke and embody either Artemis or Athena. As is true to her nature, it is also in her best interest to consistently enjoy her quiet solitude and sense of order that comes from doing “contemplative housework” and to make time for meditation. The Hestia archetype is often found to be a strong influence on the Oral, Psychopathic, and Rigid character structures. This archetype can typically be strengthened in clients with predominant Schizoid and Masochist character structures.

The Vulnerable Goddesses

The vulnerable goddesses included Hera (Goddess of Marriage), Demeter (Goddess of Grain), and Persephone (“The Maiden”). These three archetypes were relationship-oriented and represented traditional roles in society of mother, wife, and daughter. Their identities as women relied on their having a significant relationship. They demonstrated the need for bonding and affiliation. Being that they were so attuned to others’ needs (often before their own), they became vulnerable to being ‘raped, abducted, dominated, or humiliated by male gods.’³⁸ Each of these goddesses were prone to suffering when an attachment was broken or dishonored, each developing what appeared to be psychological illnesses (such as depression or psychosis). Their suffering and eventual growth can provide women with insights into our patterned emotional reactions to loss, betrayal, and disappointment.

As described in literature, it seems that women embodying the vulnerable goddess archetype may appear to use their emotional aspect as the major modifier. The mental and will centers may be the least activated centers. The vulnerable goddess holds the template for the wife, the mother, and the daughter. On an energetic level, she might appear to have most energy flowing in the front of her body, while the energy around her back may not be as active. Her heart center is usually very open (but needs to be cautious to receive as much as she gives) and her sexual center can be active (but may be somewhat repressed in its expression). Her 5th chakra can also be somewhat closed so that she has a tendency not to speak her truth in the moment. She exhibits attributes of the oral, masochist, and schizoid characterologies. She might also be seen using one of the following defenses: hysteria, silent/obvious brooding, oral sucking, withdrawal, tentacles, beside herself, and withdrawal. When a woman embodies the energy of the vulnerable goddess, she can appear nurturing, emotional, and sometimes unstable.

Hera (Goddess of Marriage)

‘Stately, regal, beautiful Hera... Her name is thought to mean “Great Lady” the feminine form of the greek word hero. Greek poets referred to her as “cow-eyed” – to compliment her large and beautiful eyes. Her symbols were the cow, the Milky Way, the lily, and the peacock’s iridescent tailfeather “eyes”

*that symbolized Hera's watchfulness. The sacred cow was an image long associated... as provider of nourishment.*³⁹

The Hera archetype represents a woman's yearning desire to be a wife. In truth, a woman with a predominant Hera archetype feels fundamentally incomplete without a partner. She is actually ashamed that she is not married and needs the prestige, respect, and honor that marriage connotes for her and needs the title of "Mrs. Somebody".⁴⁰ When she is centered and confident, she has an exquisite capacity to bond with her partner, with the utmost loyalty, endurance, and commitment to the relationship. She seeks relationship to experience wholeness through a "sacred marriage" and communion. She is attracted to the competent, successful man – deemed accordingly to her social class and family. Often he is an 'appealing, emotionally immature little boy element that can touch the Hera woman when combined with the power she finds so attractive. He may lack close friends, may not have been privy to the private grief of others, and may not have developed a capacity for empathy... He hates having talks about the relationship or having confrontations about his behavior – so a Hera woman avoids both.'⁴¹ A Hera woman's state of happiness truly depends on her husband's devotion to her, on the importance he places on the marriage, and on his appreciation of her as his wife. Many Hera women are initially handicapped because they have difficulty in assessing underlying character or in realizing patterns of behavior. When sizing up people, such women perceive surfaces rather than possibilities.⁴² When she does marry, she takes pleasure in making her husband the center of her life (even after children have been born). Her career is her marriage and she treats her sexuality as such... it is simply her duty as a wife. With her focus so completely on her husband, she doesn't place importance on friendships with other women and therefore does not usually have a best friend. If married, she only relates to other married women as half of a couple/ a friendly alliance.

The goddess Hera suffered more than any other goddess, except possibility Demeter. She persecuted others vindictively and thus was the most destructive of all goddesses. 'Hera women judge other women and punish them... for not meeting her standards.'⁴³ Hera's rage is not directed at the man who is unfaithful, but rather at "the other woman". Her vindictiveness makes a Hera woman feel powerful rather than rejected. If her husband wants to leave her for someone else, she tends to enter into denial and resists divorce. In essence, the Hera archetype can oppress women if not complimented with other goddess archetypes. The Hera woman will need Demeter to bring forth her maternal instincts, will need to call upon Athena to help assess the situation and develop a strategy to get her man or to provide her with rationality to keep her bearings in the midst of an emotional storm. Recognizing that Hera is a predominant archetype – her influence and understanding of her susceptibilities – is the first step in growing beyond her. She would do well to resist marrying the first respectable man who asks her until she knows a good deal about his character. In addition to her solid marriage, she could benefit from expanding her definition of a fulfilled woman. She must repeatedly and consciously align herself with other goddess archetypes to allow her to grow beyond the role of wife. She must relinquish her jealous demons that haunt her and learn to trust and give her husband credit for support and fidelity. She can benefit from work of any kind as a means of sublimating her rage (rather than allowing the rage to feed on itself and eventually destroy her).⁴⁴ She needs to know that she has difficulty accepting reality rather than denying it (particularly during divorce) so that she can allow herself to mourn, recover, and move on with her life. She must learn how to surrender her hopes that her husband will change and let go of her role as the victimized, vindictive Hera.⁴⁵ The Hera archetype is often found to be a strong influence on the Masochist, Psychopathic, and Rigid character structures. This archetype can typically be strengthened in clients with predominant Schizoid and Oral character structures.

Demeter (Goddess of Grain)

*'Demeter is mother: She represents the mothering aspect of ourselves. Whether she literally becomes a mother or not, a woman who fits the Demeter archetype is a nurturer, caretaker, and often a great healer. At the core of Demeter's being is her abundant love and generous heart, which extends to the whole earth – to everything that grows and gives nourishment. She's motivated by the most powerful of instincts – to give life – and is selflessly devoted to the life she creates.'*⁴⁶

Demeter is the ultimate maternal archetype. She represents women's maternal instinct to give birth and provide nourishment through physical, psychological, or spiritual avenues. If this instinct is rejected or suppressed, she can be prone to severe depressions. Because the desire to bear children is so strong in her being, she needs to take extra precautions for "unwanted pregnancies." Women with strong Demeter archetypes are described as earthly, solid, dependable, generous, altruistic, and loyal. She can be extremely stubborn and patient when her convictions are strong, which has been known to sway powerful men and institutions. However, when an event occurs that feels like she has lost her children (be it empty nest syndrome or the death of a child) and has exhausted her resources to "get them back", she will sink into a state of depression. In this state, Demeter women display depressed body and facial expressions that express their pain and make others feel defensive, guilty, angry, and helpless.⁴⁷ However, Demeter women (unlike Hera) are not competitive with other women (as it might upset the children) and tend to bond with other Demeter women. Often they will rely more on their Demeter friends than their own husbands. Demeter husbands are attracted to maternal women that will care take them and have a puritanical attitude toward sex. The Demeter woman does not have a strong sex drive, but abides for the sake of procreation. A common "guilty" secret is that 'their most sensual physical act is breastfeeding their infants, not making love to their husbands.'⁴⁸ She enters marriage primarily so that she can bear children. This is such a primary focus for her that she often has a low level fear that something bad may happen to their child (which can result in their overprotecting the child and limiting the child's independence). At the heart of this anxiety is the feared loss of the child's affection. As the children grow and begin to seek autonomy, a Demeter woman will be deeply wounded and confused if the children strike out with any resentment. She can only see her positive intention with their upbringing. 'A Demeter mother may feel guilty for any event that has an adverse effect on her child. Until she has some insight into her unrealistic expectations that she should be the perfect mother, she expects herself to be all-knowing and all-powerful, capable of foreseeing events and protecting her child from all pain.'⁴⁹

The psychological difficulties faced by Demeter women have similar themes: victimization, power and control, expression of anger, and depression. Often a woman with primary Demeter archetype finds that she has difficulty saying No and setting her boundaries for fear that she won't be perceived as the all-bountiful provider. However, it is imperative that this archetype confront this image and set healthy internal and external boundaries to avoid "burnout". Common physical symptoms to the woman with difficulty saying no and expressing her anger include: fatigue, headaches, high blood pressure, menstrual cramps, ulcer symptoms, and back pains.⁵⁰ She also must be able to choose when and with whom she will get pregnant so that it best suits her timing and reality. She must also let go of her possessiveness and her need to keep other people dependent on her. In doing so, she instead teaches and inspires mutual appreciation and love. She will find herself transformed if she learns how to express her anger (rather than leaving it bottled up within that compresses into depression), learns to say no (to avoid getting overextended and martyred), learns to "let go and let grow" (rather than foster dependency), and develops other goddess archetypes within herself to provide other interests other than mothering. She will need to look more deeply into her negative intent around her mothering so that she can embrace all of herself (instead of just the light). With the wisdom that emerges from these healings, this archetype can feel fulfilled and resilient – 'learning that she can live through whatever happens,

knowing that just as spring follows winter, so changing human experience follows certain patterns.’⁵¹ The Demeter archetype is often found to be a strong influence on the Oral, Masochist, and Rigid character structures. This archetype can most likely be strengthened in clients with predominant Schizoid and Psychopathic character structures.

Persephone (“The Maiden”)

‘The Kore was a slender, beautiful young goddess, associated with symbols of fertility – the pomegranate, grain, and corn, as well as narcissus, the flower that lured her (into the grasp of her abductor). As Queen of the Underworld, Persephone is a mature goddess, who reigns over the dead souls, guides the living who visit the underworld, and claims for herself what she wants.’⁵²

Unlike Demeter and Hera who hold archetypal patterns that are connected to strong instinctual feelings, Persephone’s personality does not contain the same strength of conviction. A woman with predominant Persephone is predisposed to be acted on by others (rather than act herself) – so that she is compliant in action and passive in attitude. She has an eternal air of youthfulness and is open and flexible. She is also called the Kore because she represents the young girl who does not yet know “who she is” nor does she aware of what she desires or what are her strengths.⁵³ The Persephone woman was commonly the daughter of an overprotective mother who learned how to please her parents at an early age. Eventually she also learns to do the same with men... she ‘adapts herself to his wishes, makes herself beautiful in his eyes, charms him, pleases him... She is generally unselfconscious; she doesn’t analyze herself or her motives; she just is; and for the most part she is inarticulate.’⁵⁴ Jungian psychology called this aspect of the Persephone archetype the “anima woman.” She receives the projection of a man’s unconscious image of a woman and in turn unconsciously conforms to the image like a chameleon. She often appears to be a child-woman who is not yet aware of her beauty and sexual attractiveness. Until she grows beyond her Persephone archetype, she is usually unconscious of her sexuality, but waiting for a Prince Charming to come along and awaken her. Once she does awake sexually, she often discovers that she is very passionate which has a positive effect on her self-esteem. She no longer feels like a little girl masquerading as a woman.⁵⁵ In order for a Persephone woman to enter into marriage, she needs to call upon Aphrodite and Hera. She will also need to invoke Demeter to foster her maternal instincts. Similarly, if Persephone is invoked with Athena or Artemis, they will benefit from Persephone’s ability to wait for the situation to change or for their feelings to be come clear. If Persephone is invoke in a Demeter woman, it will aid her in letting go of her strongly held expectations. Persephone invoked in a Hera woman will help her let go of her judgment that only she knows best.

To grow, a woman with Persephone archetype needs to learn to make commitments and to follow through with them. Her growth requires that ‘she struggle against indecisiveness, passivity, and inertia; she must make up her mind and stay committed when the choice stops being fun.’⁵⁶ She must resist the impulse to lie or manipulate, but rather to accept responsibility and stop blaming others. Unlike the Greek myth where Persephone was indeed abducted and forced to become the wife of Hades (God of the Underworld), she must learn to see that marriage always is a form of abduction or death, to be fought or resented. As Queen of the Underworld, Persephone also represents a woman’s ability to descend into her own depths to explore a deep realm of the archetypal world and then returns to the surface with greater insight into her being. She can use this ability to become a guide for others to mediate between the ordinary, known reality and the mysterious, nonordinary realities. The Persephone woman has great innate potential for extrasensory perception (particularly with connecting to souls that have passed from this reality) and can share this with others. She is a beacon of hope in that she helps us realize that darkness isn’t permanent if we can learn to be patient, endure, accept, and surrender. Her archetype mirrors our humanness through her transformational journey. The Persephone archetype is often found

to be a strong influence on the Schizoid character structures and can most likely be strengthened in clients with all other character structures.

Conclusion

Healers can help a client “invoke” a goddess archetype by guiding her to ‘consciously make an effort to see, feel, or sense (the goddess’) presence – to bring her into focus through the imagination – and then ask for her particular strength.’⁵⁷ Athena can be invoked to show the client how to think clearly in any situation, how to develop wisdom and leadership skills, how to overcome obstacles, and how to excel in a man’s world. Artemis empowers a client to strengthen her focus on current and future goals, to set her boundaries, and to connect with nature. Hestia can be invoked to teach the client how to live from the center, to enhance her spirituality, and to find peace. Hera can be called upon to guide women to cultivate committed, faithful partnerships with others. Demeter can teach women to discover her nurturing qualities, to be patient and generous, and to be superb mothers. Persephone can be invoked to bring a client in touch with her deepest parts of herself so that she can embrace the darkness and transform it into light. She can empower a woman to remain open and receptive for whatever life brings. Finally, Aphrodite can be invoked to help a client recognize her beauty, enjoy her body, and claim it as her own. Aphrodite will also allow her passion to come through and teaches that we all deserve to love and be loved as a woman. By identifying the qualities of the goddess archetypes that exist in our clients, they can become more aware of the needs they have left unfulfilled and then make conscious choices to attend to those needs.⁵⁸ ‘The goddesses empower us to find the richness that is hidden inside and create the outer manifestations of success from it. They help us to know ourselves, to value ourselves, and to express ourselves.’⁵⁹

Women in western society have long struggled to integrate their heart, power, and sexual centers to live healthier, more fulfilling lives. The goddess archetypes offer an additional method to aid clients to increase their awareness around which centers are already well-developed and what centers need strengthening. A woman looking to be more into her heart can look to Hera, Demeter, and Persephone for guidance. A woman searching for empowerment can be inspired from Artemis, Athena, and Hestia’s strength. A woman seeking to integrate her sexuality with her heart can call upon Aphrodite’s passionate energy. Just as different character structures become more active in our consciousness at different times throughout a lifetime, each goddess archetype may emerge or recess throughout a woman’s life. Ideally, as a woman learns to see herself more clearly and compassionately, she can choose to invoke different goddesses over time to embody a balance of heart, power, and sexuality. ‘Once a woman can tune in to the different parts of herself and can listen, observe, or feel her differing priorities and competing loyalties, she can then sort them out and measure their importance to her. She then can make conscious choices: when conflicts arise, she decided what priorities to place above others, and what course of action she will take. As a result, her decisions resolve inner conflicts instead of instigating internal wars. Step by step, she thus becomes a conscious choicemaker ...’⁶⁰

The use of goddess archetypes in the healing room serve as a complimentary tool to pre-existing Brennan Healing techniques. While Brennan Healers use the Reichian characterologies as an initial assessment to gain insight into the client’s being, it may be easier for a client to absorb (and even eagerly identify) with goddess archetypes because she is more familiar with the mythology of these ‘goddesses’ that have such human characteristics. The goddess archetypes can be used as another language option to discuss the client’s process with them without potentially raising defenses from the everyday negative associations of such terminologies as ‘psychopathic’ or ‘masochistic.’ The healing community would benefit from further research around god and goddess archetypes in the healing process. It would be enlightening to research the use of god archetypes for male clients’ to embrace, as

well as the possibility of using both god and goddess archetypes to heal the masculine and feminine qualities in any client – regardless if they are male or female. Another qualitative study could be to analyze the effectiveness of using goddess archetypes in combination with the Brennan Healing Science approach on individual therapy as well as in marriage counseling.

‘When you get a clear idea

of who the person you long to be is,

you can help yourself recognize

that is who you already are.’

~Heyoan, *Seeds of the Spirit* 2002

Endnotes

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- ¹ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp.15-17.
 - ² Brennan, *Hands of Light*, pp. 123-4.
 - ³ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 17.
 - ⁴ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 17.
 - ⁵ Bonheim, *Aphrodite's Daughters*, pp. 29.
 - ⁶ Bonheim, *Aphrodite's Daughters*, pp. 28.
 - ⁷ Bonheim, *Aphrodite's Daughters*, pp. 28.
 - ⁸ Bonheim, *Aphrodite's Daughters*, pp. 28.
 - ⁹ Bonheim, *Aphrodite's Daughters*, pp. 235.
 - ¹⁰ Bonheim, *Aphrodite's Daughters*, pp. 30.
 - ¹¹ Bonheim, *Aphrodite's Daughters*, pp. 30.
 - ¹² Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 17.
 - ¹³ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 26.
 - ¹⁴ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 5.
 - ¹⁵ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 46.
 - ¹⁶ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 49.
 - ¹⁷ Stassinopoulos, *Conversations with the Goddesses*, pp. 44.
 - ¹⁸ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 68.
 - ¹⁹ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 70.
 - ²⁰ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 75.
 - ²¹ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 78.
 - ²² Stassinopoulos, *Conversations with the Goddesses*, pp. 59.
 - ²³ Stassinopoulos, *Conversations with the Goddesses*, pp. 58.
 - ²⁴ Stassinopoulos, *Conversations with the Goddesses*, pp. 61.
 - ²⁵ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 83.
 - ²⁶ Stassinopoulos, *Conversations with the Goddesses*, pp. 94.
 - ²⁷ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 93.
 - ²⁸ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 100.
 - ²⁹ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 103.
 - ³⁰ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 105.
 - ³¹ Stassinopoulos, *Conversations with the Goddesses*, pp. 110.
 - ³² Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 113.
 - ³³ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 110.
 - ³⁴ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 113.
 - ³⁵ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 122.
 - ³⁶ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 127.

- ³⁷ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 129.
³⁸ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 16-17.
³⁹ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 139.
⁴⁰ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 143.
⁴¹ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 153.
⁴² Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 153.
⁴³ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 161.
⁴⁴ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 166.
⁴⁵ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 167.
⁴⁶ Stassinopoulos, *Conversations with the Goddesses*, pp. 79.
⁴⁷ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 175.
⁴⁸ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 184.
⁴⁹ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 186.
⁵⁰ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 189-90.
⁵¹ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 196.
⁵² Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 197.
⁵³ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 199.
⁵⁴ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 201.
⁵⁵ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 211.
⁵⁶ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 216.
⁵⁷ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 33.
⁵⁸ Stassinopoulos, *Conversations with the Goddesses*, pp. 11.
⁵⁹ Stassinopoulos, *Conversations with the Goddesses*, pp. 12.
⁶⁰ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 276-7.

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APPENDIX I: GODDESS CHART

Goddess¹	Category	Archetypal Roles	Significant Others	Psychological Difficulties/ Lower Self Qualities	Strengths/ Higher Self Qualities	Potential Relationship Patterns (Most common to least common)	Cultivate Goddess if	Suggested Healing Work to Strengthen Archetype²	Invoke Other Goddess Archetypes
Artemis	Virgin	Sister Competitor Feminist	Sister Companions Mother Brother	Emotional distance Ruthlessness Rage (mainly at men) Stubbornness Cause pain in others (rather than bring pain on herself) Mercilessness (black- white judgment)	Ability to set own goals and reach them, Independence, Autonomy; Friendships with women, Loyalty; Ability to speak truth; Clarity of vision; Intense focus; Perseverance; Moved by wrongs done; Propensity to take action	Brotherly love attracted to her strength – Relationship as an asexual, companionable; Involved with nurturing men – Teaches her consideration and sensitivity; Early father-daughter – Husband doesn’t support her and her self-esteem suffers; Competitive relationship – Strong man where competition kills the marriage.	Women addicted to men; Need courage to see herself as whole; Scared of divorce; Needs to develop her less conscious, receptive, relationship-oriented potential; Unaware of time passing; Unaware of the importance of love; Lacking her procreative instinct and creativity.	Define personal boundaries. Develop physical strength, vitality, and appreciation of nature. Develop a sense of adventure. Explore need for loving intimacy with men.	For sensuality, strengthen Aphrodite. For monogamous marriage, strengthen Hera. For children, strengthen Demeter. For receptivity and clarity of emotions, strengthen Persephone.
Athena	Virgin	Father’s Daughter Strategist	Father Chosen Heroes	Emotional distance Craftiness Lack of empathy Merciless Resist change Lack of feelings	Ability to think well, to solve practical problems and strategize; Form strong alliances with men; Diplomatic; Foresight; Planning; Mastery of a craft; Patience; Fierce Loyalty; Disciplined.	Seeks company of men and enjoys being in midst of male action and power; Avoids emotional/sexual entanglements with men; Companion, colleague, confidante; “Power is the best aphrodisiac”; Unimpressed with sensitive, dreamer men; Avoids contact with women, unless similar to herself. Well represented among lesbians who value companionship and loyalty.	Women needing to think clearly in the midst of an emotional situation; Women competing on the same terms as a man in her particular occupation or educational field; Young women having difficulty with disciplined study; Women lacking awareness of her procreative instinct and creativity.	Identify goals and role models. Define the relationship with father. Expand the mind.	For sexuality to become an expression of erotic attraction or emotional commitment, strengthen Aphrodite and Hera. For receptivity and clarity of emotions, strengthen Persephone.
Hestia	Virgin	Maiden Aunt Wise Woman	None	Lack of social persona Emotional distance Lacks negativity Can become burnt out Doesn’t speak up if she feels devalued Low self-esteem in social settings	Feels whole as she is; Ability to enjoy solitude and meditation; Innate sense of spiritual meaning; Perceives by looking inward and intuitively senses; Strong ability to focus; Never rushed by time; Feels inner harmony as she accomplishes everyday tasks; Thrives in religious communities; Can listen with a compassionate heart and stay centered.	Often has only a few good friends who she see from time to time; Attract men who are drawn to quiet, unassertive, self-sufficient women and view women as either madonnas or whores; Attract men who see themselves as head of the household and want a quiet, Madonna wife; She appreciates autonomy to run a household; May be taken for granted.	Women that are not grounded in the midst of outer chaos, disorder, or ordinary, everyday bustle; Stressed over time passing; Unable to meditate or calm the mind; Unable to focus her attention to the task at hand.	Sanctify her home. Sanctify her daily life. Learn to express her feelings so that people who are special to her can know it. Acquire assertiveness	For assertiveness with others, strengthen Artemis or Athena For sexuality, strengthen Aphrodite.
Hera	Vulnerable	Wife Commitment Maker	Husband	Jealousy Vindictiveness Rage (as power) Feels incomplete without a partner Difficulty assessing the underlying character of men Possessive Shrew-like Judge other women ‘Most destructive goddess’ Inability to trust	Ability to make a lifetime commitment; Fidelity; Watchfulness; Capacity to bond; Loyalty and faithfulness; Endurance.	Her husband is the center of her life; Her career is marriage; Consciously subordinates her needs to promote her husbands’; Doesn’t place importance on female friends; Cancels plans with women for a man; Once married, only can relate to married women; Attracted to successful men from her social class that may have an appealing, emotionally immature element and lack empathy; She avoids confrontation with her husband; Her happiness depends on her husband’s devotion to her; Children are secondary to husband.	Women unable to leave destructive relationships; Women that avoid relationship commitments; Women only interested in unavailable men; Women that solely focus on achieving work-related goals; Women out of touch with their emotions and instincts; Women with difficulty trusting their husbands.	Take command of herself. Renew her environment. Strengthen her partnerships. Identify her needs.	If widowed, she must strengthen other goddess archetypes to regain a sense of self (particularly Artemis, Athena, and Hestia). For motherhood, strengthen Demeter. For openness and flexibility around expectations, strengthen Persephone.

Goddess	Category	Archetypal Roles	Significant Others	Psychological Difficulties/ Lower Self Qualities	Strengths/ Higher Self Qualities	Potential Relationship Patterns (Most common to least common)	Cultivate Goddess if	Suggested Healing Work to Strengthen Archetype	Invoke Other Goddess Archetypes
Demeter	Vulnerable	Mother Nurturer	Daughter -or- Children	Depression Burnout Fostering dependency. Unplanned pregnancy. Stubbornness Places children's needs before her own. Use guilt and withholding what another needs for manipulation. Victimization Power and Control Unexpressed Anger Passive-Aggressive Behavior	Ability to be maternal and nurturing of others; Generosity; Perseverance; Patience; Able provider of emotional and psychological support; Solid; Dependable; Outer-directed; Altruistic; Loyal.	Often marry young to have children; Not competitive with other women (but may be jealous about their relationship with their children); Many female friends who provide emotional support (that they may not receive from their husbands); Attract men who like maternal women; Does not have high expectations of men; Marries either: sensitive man who does not value his specialness (as she does); the sociopath (incapable of appreciation) who feels entitled to receive and is filled by Demeter's ability to give; the man who wants "a girl just like the girl who married dear old Dad" (who treats him like a son); or, a family man who is mature and generous – and appreciate of a partner who shares his dream.	Women who feel no desire to bear children; Women who dread the idea of care-taking others; Women who are undependable and unstable.	Nurture self and others. Enhance the relationship with mother. Connect with Mother Earth.	For a more fulfilling marriage, strengthen Hera. For sexuality, strengthen Aphrodite. For a stronger sense of self, embody Athena, Artemis, and Hestia. For receptivity and empathy, strengthen Persephone.
Persephone	Vulnerable	Mother's Daughter Receptive Woman	Mother Husband	Depression/ Psychosis Withdrawal into unreality Passive Avoids anger Dependency Lack of self-awareness/identity Waiting for reality to happen Pleases others instead of self Manipulation Lies to avoid responsibility Can't commit (until it happens to her) Lack of drive No sense of time Narcissism	Ability to be receptive; Appreciates imagination and dreams; Potential psychic abilities; Charming; Serves as a guide for others who visit the 'underworld' in their dreams, fantasies, or delusions; Ability to move back and forth between the ego-based reality of the "real" world and the unconscious reality of the psyche; Resiliency; Flexibility; Openness; Youthful quality.	"Anima woman" – all things to all men; Chameleon to everyone's desires; Innate receptivity makes her malleable to other's wants; Unconsciously conforms to other's expectations; She can be a 'child-woman' with both sexuality and innocence; Attracts men who are either: young and inexperienced as she is; tough men drawn to her innocence and fragility; and, men who are uncomfortable with "grownup" women; Marriage often "happens to her" like an abduction; Comfortable with other women like herself; Relies on girlfriends to try new things; May attract female friends who don't consider themselves as attractive who will treat her as special; Her closest friend usually has a stronger personality; Avoid conflict and confrontation.	Women who are rigidly moving through life, solely focused on their end goal; Women who feel stuck in any situation (job, depression, marriage, etc.).	Free her unconscious mind. Help others transform. Cultivate the art of acceptance.	For marriage, strengthen Aphrodite and Hera. To feel like an authentic mother, activate Demeter. For direction and drive, strengthen Athena and Artemis. To develop her animus, strengthen Aphrodite.
Aphrodite	Alchemical	Lover (Sensual Woman) Creative Woman	Lovers Husband	Serial relationships Promiscuity Difficulty considering consequences Difficulty considering consequences Unwanted pregnancy Exposure to STDs Lives without thought of future planning	Ability to enjoy pleasure and beauty; Sensual and creative; Loving; Does what pleases her; Focused and receptive consciousness; Muse; Ability to draw others out with loving encouragement; Her presence generates energy; Carrier of vision and inspires dreams; Tremendous force for change; Charismatic; Spontaneous; Attractive.	She enters relationships where the feelings of desire are mutual; Never a victim of a man's unwanted passion for her; Values emotional experience with others more than either independence from others or permanent bonds; Platonic love, soul connection, deep friendship, rapport, and empathetic expressions are all expressions of love; Intercourse is synonymous with communication and communion; Often attract men that are creative, complex, moody or emotional; Enduring, monogamous marriage is difficult for her to attain; May be mistrusted by other Hera women and feel judged.	Women who are overly emotional or overly mental; Women who are not in touch with their sensual impulses and sexuality; Women seeking creative impulse and inspiration; Women unable to follow their heart; Women in need of change.	Reveal her inner and outer beauty. Pamper her body. Change her routine (add spontaneity).	For commitment in relationship and marriage, strengthen Hera. To develop skills or to acquire an education, strengthen Artemis and Athena. For stability with raising children, embody Demeter. To resist erotic attraction through the practice of meditation, strengthen Hestia.

Goddess	Examples	Characterologies Already Present ²	Characterologies To Be Strengthened	Pattern	Sexuality	Primary Functioning Chakras	Modifiers Major (M) Minor (m)	Energetic Defense System	Archetype Needs
Artemis	Jane Goodall Georgia O'Keefe Amelia Earhart	Psychopath Rigid	Schizoid Oral Masochist	Hold Up Hold Back	Immune to falling in love; Sexuality remains undeveloped and unexpressed; Relationships are secondary; Sex is a recreational sport rather than a physical expression of emotional intimacy; Marriage often has egalitarian quality (brotherly love); Contempt for vulnerable men	7 th , 6 th , 5 th , 4 th Rear aspect Will Centers, 6 th Front aspect	Mental / Will – Major Emotional – Minor	Upper half of body On periphery withheld from the cores	Cultivate her feminine aspect (softness, receptivity, feelings toward marriage and motherhood); Acknowledge her vulnerabilities and need for another; Discover that love and trust of another special person is very precious to her; Confront her own destructiveness directly to see how much damage it causes; Feel her own humility that returns her to her humanity (rather than righteous and all-powerful); Develop compassion and empathy; Forgive others and herself for making mistakes.
Athena	Florence Nightengale Queen Elizabeth I Susan B. Anthony	Psychopath Rigid	Schizoid Oral Masochist	Hold Up Hold Back	Immune to falling in love; Lives in her mind and is often out of touch with her body; Not overtly sexual or romantic; Often celibate for long periods; Views sex as 'part of the agreement'; Often embraces lesbianism and is attracted to women like herself.	7 th , 6 th , 5 th , 4 th Rear aspect Will Centers, 6 th Front aspect	Mental / Will – Major Emotional – Minor	Upper half of body On periphery withheld from the cores Many armor plates	Release the need to sit in judgment of others; Develop compassion and empathy; Find a way to get her mind off business; Calm her mind with crafts (or similar activity); Create with practicality to feel an inner balance to her outer-world focus; Rediscover her child nature and view the world as a wide-eyed child; Play, laugh, cry, and be hugged; Allow herself to be mothered; Feel the strength of her maternal, sexual, and procreative instincts.
Hestia	Mother Teresa	Schizoid Masochist	Oral Psychopathic Rigid	Hold Together Hold In	Immune to falling in love; Sexuality is not important to her (even if she is orgasmic).	Asymmetrical, 2 nd rear, 3 rd front, 6 th front, 7 th 3 rd front, 6 th front	Mental/Will – Major Emotional – Minor	Frozen at the Core Hypoactive Boiling Inside	Fashion a social adaptable persona; Acquire assertiveness when interacting with others to take care of herself in the world; Hold onto her center to stay true to herself in social arenas; Continue to seek her wholeness in solitude and then emerge with that knowing.
Hera	Queen Victoria	Schizoid Oral	Masochist Psychopathic Rigid	Hold Together Hold On	Assumes that sexuality and marriage go together; Often inexperienced before marriage; May be inorgasmic in the beginning of marriage.	Asymmetrical, 2 nd rear, 3 rd front, 6 th front, 7 th 2 nd front, 6 th front, 7 th	Emotional – Major Will/Mental – Minor	Frozen at the Core In the head	She would do well to resist marrying the first man who asks her to marry him until she gets to know him better; Expand her definition of self beyond the role of wife; Strengthen her ability to adapt in the face of her husband's death or divorce; Recognize that she has neglected facets of herself that might now enrich her as well as her marriage; Feel her competence; See marriage as a growth experience and attempt to give her husband credit for support and fidelity; Transform rage and pain into creative work; Learn to accept reality in the face of divorce.

Goddess	Examples	Characterologies Already Present	Characterologies To Be Strengthened	Pattern	Sexuality	Primary Functioning Chakras	Modifiers Major (M) Minor (m)	Energetic Defense System	Archetype Needs
Demeter	Anne Sullivan Oprah Winfrey	Oral Masochist Rigid	Schizoid Psychopathic	Hold On Hold In Hold Back	Sexuality is not very important; Loves to cuddle; Often comes from a puritanical attitude to sexuality; Sex is for procreation, not pleasure; Feels the deep desire to be a biological mother; She longs to give birth and breastfeed; Sometimes a “guilty secret” is her most sensual physical act is breastfeeding her infant.	2 nd front, 6 th front, 7 th 3 rd front, 6 th front Will Centers, 6 th Front aspect	Emotional – Major Will/Mental – Minor	In the head Boiling Inside At the Periphery	She must take charge of her own life by learning to choose when and how and to whom she will give.; Learn to say no to a person who needs something from her and to the goddess within; Choose when and with whom she will have a baby and be more careful about birth control; Face her negative feelings and negative behavior toward others; Recover from depression with resiliency and growth.
Persephone	Alice in Wonderland	Schizoid Rigid	Oral Masochist Psychopathic	Hold Together Hold Back	Her sexuality is unawakened (although men find her sexually appealing); She likes men to like her, but lacks passion and is probably inorgasmic; Waiting for her prince to come along and awaken her; Feels like a girl masquerading as a woman; Once she awakens her sexuality, she is passionate, orgasmic, and has higher self-esteem.	Asymmetrical, 2 nd rear, 3 rd front, 6 th front, 7 th Will Centers, 6 th Front aspect	Emotional – Major Will/Mental – Minor	Frozen at the Core At the Periphery	She must make decisions and commit without leaving open a back door; Face her life on her own and become independent; Become a mature, passionate, sexual woman; Increase awareness to the vulnerable sides of men; Uncover the capacity for ecstatic religious experience; Develop her potential for heightened HSP; Become a guide to the Underworld for others.
Aphrodite	Cleopatra Madame Bovary Marilyn Monroe	Schizoid Psychopathic	Oral Masochist Rigid	Hold Together Hold Up	May have been precociously aware of her sexuality at a young age; Enjoyed a sense of power and attraction when older men respond to her flirtations; Parents might have given covert encouragement to become sexually active, and then punished her.	Asymmetrical, 2 nd rear, 3 rd front, 6 th front, 7 th 7 th , 6 th , 5 th , 4 th Rear aspect	More balanced modifiers	Frozen at the Core Upper half of Body	Accept that it is in her nature to fall in love easily, to experience erotic attraction, and to have a strong sexual drive; Release any guilt around her sensuality; Learn to dampen the budding ardor of a man she doesn’t want to encourage; Learn to reflect on the consequences before she acts – respond less impulsively and more responsibly; Stay with a confused situation until clarity emerges; Love someone with all his imperfections so that she can stay in relationship long enough to accept the human flaws in her partner (and herself) and to discover the more human dimensions of love.

¹ Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman*, pp. 301-302.

² Stassinopoulos, *Conversations with the Goddesses*, pp. 44.

³ Brennan, *Hands of Light*, pp.111-3.