

Emotional Ordeal #1: Resentment

Righteous resentment. Obsession with the betrayer. Desire for revenge.

First, we wish to hurt our betrayer. We want them to hurt at least as much as we hurt. Righteous resentment and the obsessive desire for revenge define this emotional ordeal. Instead of confronting our betrayer, Hillman says we tend to let the wound fester, and we fume about the injustice of it. The test comes when we face our desire to hurt another and choose a different course of action.

Watch for thoughts like "How could he (or she) do this to me?" "It's just not fair," or "I don't deserve to be treated like this!" These types of thoughts fuel the desire for vengeance or vindication. As hard as it is to shift your attention away from your betrayer, this is the time to focus on *you*, your values, your needs, your truth. Instead of spending time and energy obsessing about your betrayer, devote that time and energy to yourself and your growth process.

Emotional Ordeal #2: Denial

Denial of the positive and seeing only negative traits in the betrayer. Bitterness, resignation, and projection of the shadow.

If we fail the first emotional test and give in to obsessing about the hurt and injustice, the next emotional ordeal increases in intensity. We now begin to see only negative qualities. Where once our betrayer was the apple of our eye, our idealized hero or heroine turns into a vicious villain. Our former loved one acts in ways we would supposedly never act. We deny that there is any good in them that might redeem them in our eyes.

This rejection of one's betrayer frequently reflects disowned or rejected aspects of oneself. The element within one's personality that is unconscious, socially unacceptable, or deemed to be inappropriate is called the *shadow*. *Watch for thoughts like "I always knew she (or he) was self-centered and inconsiderate."* This type of thinking may be a projection of your shadow. It is always easier to see someone else's blind spots, while our own remain unconscious, hidden from view in the shadow. Projecting our shadow onto our betrayer, we bitterly resign ourselves to the belief that he or she deserves our punishment. The test is to release the rationalizing and punishing mind, which splits life into good or bad. The soul is challenged to perceive both good and bad, darkness and light, vulnerabilities and

strengths in oneself and in one's betrayer. The test is to release unconscious motives by coming to terms with the betrayer and yourself for yourself and others.

Emotional Ordeal #3: Cynicism

Cynical generalization. Projection of the shadow onto the betrayer.

Generalizing, or attributing characteristics to others deemed by us to be like our betrayer, defines this emotional ordeal, cynicism. Cynicism distorts our perception of the world. *Watch for thoughts like "That's just the way they are."* Projecting your betrayer's negative traits onto others is stereotyping and prejudice.

Healing stereotyped thinking, which is a part of this emotional ordeal, has the added benefit of releasing us from betrayal wounds that have progressed to a point where we front our generalizations, including racism, prejudice, and bigotry. We begin to intuitively recognize one's relationships are not generalizations. Instead, seek to understand the relationships—that is, what you offer to others and what every individual and group is part of. The test is to play a part to play in the spiritual evolution of the world.

Emotional Ordeal #4: Self-Betrayal

Self-betrayal. Self-rejection. Abandonment of self and dreams.

Cynicism injures one's faith in oneself. The test is to come not so much from the projection of self-trust. We ask ourselves, "How can I trust myself?" By the fourth ordeal, we too are included in the generalization of people. Because we can not trust ourselves, we abandon our dreams and desires. Notice if you are living your life without your ideals, essential values, or vitality. *Watch for thoughts like "I will never love again," "Love hurts too much."* Self-betrayal is the denial of your essential self. When you deny your personal values, gifts, and resources, you feel cut off from yourself and others.

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ould he (or she) do this to me?" "It's just not like this!" These types of thoughts are a form of self-protection. As hard as it is to shift your focus from the betrayer to you, your values, and your energy, it is the time to focus on you, your values, and your energy to yourself and your

ly negative traits in the betrayer. of the shadow.

I give in to obsessing about the hurt that increases in intensity. We now begin to see our betrayer as the apple of our eye, a vicious villain. Our former betrayer can never act. We deny that there is anything in our eyes.

ntly reflects disowned or rejected aspects of one's personality that is unconsciously to be inappropriate is called the shadow. "How new she (or he) was self-centered," may be a projection of your own shadow's blind spots, while our own shadow is the shadow. Projecting our own shadow onto the belief that he or she is bad. The soul is challenged to release the rationalizing and the shadow and light, vulnerabilities and

strengths in oneself and in one's betrayer. Recognizing your own unconscious motives by coming to terms with your shadow builds compassion for yourself and others.

Emotional Ordeal #3: Cynicism

Cynical generalization. Projection of negative traits onto all others like the betrayer.

Generalizing, or attributing characteristics of the shadow to all others deemed by us to be like our betrayer, leads to the third emotional ordeal, cynicism. Cynicism distorts perception and corrupts our values. Watch for thoughts like "That's just like a man" or "You know how women are." Projecting your betrayer's negative traits onto groups leads to stereotyping and prejudice.

Healing stereotyped thinking, which is necessary to passing this emotional ordeal, has the added benefit of healing society. Healing personal betrayal wounds that have progressed into cynicism requires that we confront our generalizations, including those that take the form of sexism, racism, prejudice, and bigotry. The soul is challenged to look within and intuitively recognize one's relationship to the collective. The test is to stop generalizing. Instead, seek to understand your unique gifts and contributions—that is, what you offer to others. Ultimately, you should realize that every individual and group is part of the whole and as such, each has a part to play in the spiritual evolution of humanity.

Emotional Ordeal #4: Self-Betrayal

Self-betrayal. Self-rejection. Abandonment of personal ideals, principles, and dreams.

Cynicism injures one's faith in oneself. The real pain of cynicism comes not so much from the projection of the shadow as from the erosion of Self-trust. We ask ourselves, "How could I have been so blind, so stupid?" By the fourth ordeal, we too are included in the equation of untrustworthy people. Because we can not trust ourselves, we betray our most cherished dreams and desires. Notice if you have given into the abandonment of your ideals, essential values, or vital dreams. Watch for thoughts like "I'll never love again," "Love hurts too much," or "I just don't have what it takes." Self-betrayal is the denial of your essential Self as it is expressed through your personal values, gifts, and resources. Spiraling into the abyss of self-betrayal, you feel cut off from yourself, out of touch with who you are, and

what matters most to you. You stop listening to yourself and acting on your own behalf.

Self-betrayal, and the pain of loneliness that it brings, is at the core of most betrayal experiences. This fourth test must be faced alone. Existentially, we are alone, and there is something positively unique about each one of us that also separates us from each other. Discovery of your unique gifts, talents, and resources inspires a sense of purpose in life. Spiritual purpose is the soul challenge of this test.

Emotional Ordeal #5: Paranoia

Suspicion of future betrayals. Fear, control, and manipulation. Contracts and agreements.

If one does not find a way beyond self-betrayal, one collapses into the fifth emotional ordeal. The world is perceived as a hostile place in which one is left to fend for oneself. Like when the Frog Prince made the princess agree to take him as a companion before he was willing to retrieve her golden ball from the well, when the betrayed person gets caught in this fifth emotional ordeal, he or she resorts to control and manipulation. Both conscious and unconscious rules and regulations guide one's interactions with others. Always afraid of being hurt again, one tries to extract contracts and agreements from others before engaging with them, in an attempt to protect against future betrayals. This is as far from trust as one can possibly get.

Notice if you are living by self-imposed rules, or if you find that you are afraid to take risks. *Watch for thoughts like "I'll go out with him (or her)—but if he (or she) shows up late or doesn't treat me right even once, that's it, it's over."* As we learn to distinguish our fears from the sounds of our true inner voice, we are tested to discover the deeper truth—that we are each free, spiritually, free to be ourselves.

Many of us take this traditional route through resentment, denial of the positive, cynicism, and self-betrayal to descend into a paranoid world of fear, control, and manipulation. We are plunged into the despairing darkness of this initiation. We never pass through the ordeals. In our righteousness, we assume the role of the Angel of Death, God's chosen one, who avenges injustice. We fool ourselves into believing that we are the initiator chosen to teach our betrayers "the lessons they deserve." The five ordeals of betrayal become traps—emotional snares that impede our growth and block our experience of wholeness.

Symbolic Death: Dealin

Symbolic death follows purification. to help the initiate let go of false iden no longer appropriate or no longer must confront and release any perso bitions that impede our progress. It righteous resentment and desire for in our betrayer, our cynical rationa others, and our depressing self-betr ing defined by Dr. Elisabeth Kübl *Death and Dying*.⁵ No matter how r that they are dying, get angry that t with God to live, grieve, cry, or othe reality for them. The power of dea defenses. Acceptance of this great the death and dying process that K

Death of a dream is just as poi to a profound sense of loss. Each o denial, anger, rationalization, dep the instinctive reactions one might threatened. Movement psychologi artist Stuart Heller, Ph.D., says tha to change with an adrenal stress r In the animal world are four natu and freeze. Like the possum who humans go unconscious by den Heller suggests that passive-aggre plays of anger, as is evident when denial mechanisms are challenged to the aggressive *fight* reaction of take to the sky to dodge a preda consciousness, expresses itself as ization, as when our mind runs deer in the headlights who stand tion, and in humans this shows u when one feels stuck, heavy, or in