



The Goddess Within

Excerpts from
Goddess Gift: Discover Your Goddess Type
by Sharon Turnbull, Ph.D.

The goddess path is within you . . . that is where she lives, even when you forget to look for her. Look for her there, and you will always find her.

~Patricia Monaghan, *The Goddess Path*



The Goddess Within

Excerpts from
Goddess Gift: Discover Your Goddess Type
by Sharon Turnbull, Ph.D.

The Goddess Within

Imagine a woman in touch with her ancient feminine powers, wise, intuitive, energetic, and compassionate. This is a woman on the path to becoming the woman that she was meant to be.

If you hope to:

- embark on a journey of self-discovery,
- empower your self with intention and feel a greater sense
of control over your life, or
- just catch you breath and reflect on the patterns of your life,

then this might be one of the most important books you'll ever read.

Women who live abundant lives share one important trait -- they have learned how to access and use the power of their personalities. How do they do it? They may listen to the opinions and the advice of others, but they insist on examining their own lives, noticing the trends and looking at what is working and what is not, realizing what is valuable and real for them as individuals, not just listening to what others think is best for them.

But more importantly, they live their lives with self-acceptance and intention, refusing to let their dreams die, their visions fade, or to allow themselves to be satisfied with a life of mediocrity.

In short, they live like goddesses!

The Patterns of Your Life

Be a doormat . . . Or be a Goddess!

--Pablo Picasso

Della now comes to the therapy group for abused women every week. In the beginning she often didn't show up and seldom spoke up when she did. Recently she seldom misses a meeting and often joins in the lively discussions. I am beginning to feel optimistic about her progress.

Ordinarily Della goes for the natural look, but today she is wearing a ton of makeup though it fails to completely conceal the fresh bruise on her left cheek. The session starts when one of the women blurts out, "OK, Della, so who's the new jerk?"

With tears pooling in her eyes, Della reports on her latest acquisition in the long string of losers that she has admitted into her life. She tells the group about the unemployed mechanic she met last month who is now living at her place until he can find work.

The others are quick to point out that it does not appear he is exactly exhausting himself in his search for employment, and Della rushes to his defense, insisting that he's paying his way. After all he changed the oil and replaced the fan belt in her car this week.

In my work I've been blessed with the opportunity to help women of all ages make successful transitions in the different stages of their lives and to help them survive, even flourish, during difficult changes that are often upheavals they neither expected nor desired.

Watching a woman like Della, who clings to the very ways that have defeated her in the past can be difficult and tiring. It requires patience. "Two steps forward, one step back," I think, "Sometimes that's the only way you can measure progress in a woman's life."

The next day, getting to work a few minutes early to grab a cup of coffee before the staff meeting, I marvel at Vivian's last minute arrival. "We're both in our late 50's", I think, "but how does she manage it? Somehow she always looks years younger, rested, and absolutely radiant!"

Never mind that Vivian is always perfectly groomed, dressed in the latest style, has impeccable taste, and captures the eye of every man she encounters. It's impossible

to be jealous of her. Her flirtations are playful, and she is friendly and good-hearted, regaling us with the stories of her latest adventures, and she hasn't a mean bone in her body. We've enjoyed her presence in our workplace she since the day she arrived. She is one of those rare women who light up any gathering when they enter the room.

Midway through the meeting, I glance at Vivian and suddenly sense that there is something strange about her expression, something amiss, a little *off*. Intrigued, I stop doodling and start watching her out of the corner of my eye as the meeting goes on. Eventually I put my finger on what was disturbing me -- no matter what was going on around the table her expression had never changed, no furrowing of the brows, no eyebrows raised to signify surprise, not even a wide-mouthed smile when something funny made us all laugh.

"So that's what she did for her vacation last month," I realized, "another facelift." Generous to a fault, Vivian had always been willing to share her beauty secrets with the rest of us at work, even the somewhat grisly details of her previous nips and tucks. Had she gone too far this time? I wondered.

Though I'm not particularly judgmental about the notion of cosmetic surgery *per se*, and on occasion have even fantasized about doing it myself, there's always been a little voice inside telling me it's better to be comfortable with who you are, warts, wrinkles, and all. (I gladly admit that maybe it's just that I'm a bit of a coward.) While I sat there pondering the pros and cons of cosmetic procedures, I sincerely hoped that this warm and charming woman would know when to stop and not put herself 'under the knife' once too often, erasing the marvelous expressiveness of her beautiful and womanly 'natural' face.

What connects the stories of these two women who are so very different and yet so much alike . . . Della, driven by her strong need to be needed, and Vivian who seems terrified by the departure of her youth?

What is it that sets us each of us on a particular path in our lives, compelled to repeat the same old patterns time after time, whether it brings us joy or clearly isn't in our best interest and will likely cause us pain? What has such power, such influences over the pattern of our lives?

It is the power of personality, a power that shapes the patterns of our lives for good or ill.

Without a doubt, your personality is the most important factor that drives the success of your career, your relationships, and your health and happiness. To harness the tremendous potential of your personality, it is important to first recognize it and then to gain insight into how it influences your life.

Each one of us is born with an inherent temperament that predisposes us to develop as one of a number of personality types. In the next chapter we will

explore how these personality types are linked to specific goddesses who embody the different temperaments or dispositions.

These 'goddess gifts' reveal themselves at an early age and remain fairly constant throughout our lives. They influence how you learn and think, how you decide and act, who you select as friends and mates, even where your talents lie - in short, everything that makes you unique and guides the direction of your life. This gift, your personal goddess type, is your favored, most trusted style in dealing with the outer world.

Think of your personality as being made up of two different aspects--your temperament and your character. Your temperament is a set of predispositions you were born with, the result of your neurological 'hard-wiring' and is not very changeable. Think of your temperament as a strong tendency of see or do things in a certain way, the style that usually seems most natural to you. For example, whether you feel more comfortable being a 'talker' or a 'listener' when around strangers is a matter of temperament.

Your character, however, develops from your experiences and how you interact with your environment. It is essentially a set of characteristic ways you have of dealing with things, a set of habits that you've learned. Character is more changeable than temperament.

Your life situation challenges you to develop your character to survive/succeed in your environment when your experiences (or the roles you play in life) aren't good 'matches' for your natural temperament. You may consciously develop skills that compensate for your temperament, seem more 'talkative' even though you are, by nature, a true 'listener'.

We all, at times, wear masks--a face we show to others. And sometimes we find ourselves wearing them so often that they seem to have 'grown' onto us and become permanent.

The masks we wear often represent who we feel we are expected to be or who we have been coerced to be from our family of origin and/or our partners. Often our behavior is a facade, a way to protect us from feelings of disappointment, rejection, loneliness, guilt, fear, and shame.

We may try to protect ourselves by being self-sacrificing, always trying to be a 'people-pleaser'. Or by becoming a super-achiever, blindly accepting the career choices our parents or teachers have selected for us even though we feel no passion for them, or by taking unnecessary risks with our lives by going along with the crowd in an attempt to 'fit in'.

Or we may try to keep our balance by using angry outbursts, manipulating others, becoming overly dependent, or by becoming depressed or simply withdrawing.

Constantly wearing a mask, having to function as a different personality type for a prolonged period of time, inevitably takes a terrible toll, making life difficult and stripping it of joy. The maneuvers that a mask requires usually only increase our feelings of isolation and loneliness and build barriers that prevent true intimacy.

Whether or not you feel there is anything wrong in your life, an analysis of your personality can be beneficial when you start to seek insight or understanding of the patterns of your life. It can help you to identify the authentic you.

The secret to harnessing the tremendous power of your personality is to examine yourself dispassionately. Discover who you are not who you feel you 'ought to be' (or who you seem to have become as a result of suppressing the 'real you' in the interest of getting along).

As women we must learn to live from the inside - out, rather than the outside - in. The hero's quest, a venture that is typically masculine, involves 'going out' (into the world) and 'doing' -- building a castle, slaying a dragon, rescuing a

maiden, that sort of thing. In contrast the woman's quest, the heroine's journey, usually involves 'going down' (inward) and 'knowing' instead of doing, finding the meaning and connectedness in all things.

Robert Johnson, in his insightful analysis of the myths of the Greek goddess Psyche points out that:

A woman has a profound capacity to be still, perhaps the most powerful act any human being can make. She is required to go back to a very still inner center every time something profound happens to her. This is a highly creative act but must be done correctly. She is to be receptive, not passive.

She, by Robert Johnson

In that very still inner center a goddess lives, whether you are consciously aware of her or not. She waits for you to harness her powers in your search for personal fulfillment, your personal quest to become the woman that you were truly meant to be.

Armed now with a basic understanding of personality and how it works, we're prepared to turn to the meaning of the archetypes and to learn 'How to be the Heroine in Your Own Life Story'. We are ready to move one step closer to meeting your inner goddess and embracing her, welcoming her heady and healing presence into your daily life.



Sharon Turnbull, PhD, is the author of *Goddess Gift: Discover Your Personal Goddess Type*, a book about how to connect with your inner goddess and start living the life you were always meant to live.

Sharon also created of the popular online personality assessments, The Goddess Quiz and The Greek Gods Quiz for men.

Sharon invites you to click here to subscribe to The Goddess Gift Newsletter, a free monthly e-zine that combines mythology, archetypal psychology, personal growth and just plain fun.

You're invited to visit her websites at:

<http://www.goddessgift.com> and <http://www.men-myths-minds.com>.