

**Shrink Rap Radio #335 January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013**

**“The Archetypal Couple”**

**Dr. David Van Nuys Ph.D., aka ‘Dr. Dave’ interviews Dr. Tamar Kron**  
(Transcribed from <http://www.shrinkrapradio.com> by Gloria Oelman)

**Introduction:**

My guest today is Israeli Jungian analyst Dr. Tamar Kron and we will be discussing her very illuminating book *The Archetypal Couple*. Tamar Kron PhD is a clinical psychologist and Jungian analyst. She is head of the clinical psychology graduate program at the Academic College of Tel Aviv and she has a private practice in Jerusalem. Her main research interests are dreams, the therapeutic relationship, post partum depression and the couple relationship. Dr. Kron published articles and books on the above subjects and she’s written three novels. In her recent book *The Archetypal Couple* she explores the life cycle of the couple, weaving together Greek mythology, Old Testament stories and her own experience as a couples therapist.

Now here’s the interview.

**Dr. Dave:** Dr. Tamar Kron welcome to Shrink Rap Radio.

**Tamar Kron:** Hi, I’m very glad to be here.

**Dr. Dave:** Well, it’s great to finally have you on the show. We should let listeners know that you and I met at last summer’s International Association for the Study of Dreams conference in Berkeley and we really hit it off and you gave me a copy of your book then and I’ve been meaning to have you on Shrink Rap Radio ever since. So, welcome again.

**Tamar Kron:** That’s fine.

**Dr. Dave:** O.K. well you are a Jungian analyst and you’re also, I guess, originally a clinical psychologist, where did you get your Jungian training?

**Tamar Kron:** I got my Jungian training here in Jerusalem, Israel.

**Dr. Dave:** Oh, so there is an Institute there?

**Tamar Kron:** Yeah, we have an Institute, it’s called the Israeli Institute for Jungian Psychology.

**Dr. Dave:** Ah, very interesting, I didn’t know that and so tell us about your call to become a Jungian analyst. I’ve spoken to other analysts and usually there’s some kind of interesting story about, you know, what put them on this path because it’s not an easy path necessarily. So how did you get the call?

**Tamar Kron:** Right, well for many years I was a, you know, psychodynamic therapist. All my training was in the psychoanalytic tradition and at that time I worked in the psychiatric hospital and it's interesting because actually I got to Jung through Martin Buber, although Carl Jung and Martin Buber had a terrible quarrel.

**Dr. Dave:** Oh, you say they did, or they would have?

**Tamar Kron:** They did have.

**Dr. Dave:** Oh, my goodness, I didn't know that.

**Tamar Kron:** They did have, because of the issue of 'is there are a God, or is God only a projection of our Self archetype?'

**Dr. Dave:** Uh, huh.

**Tamar Kron:** In any case, when I worked in the psychiatric hospital about 15 years ago, I realized that the relationships between the staff and the patients has something more to do than, you know, just a kind of therapisations and interpretations and so on and I started to read Martin Buber about the dialogue and then I had this dream. A very, very deep dream for me – it was actually a turning point for me. Shall I tell you the dream?

**Dr. Dave:** Yes, if you don't mind.

**Tamar Kron:** Yeah, I don't because I wrote it also in my books (laughter). So in the dream, I had a patient at that time in the hospital and she used to always to, you know, to watch me when we sat together and say things like 'Oh, Tamar, you're probably such a good mother and I'm such a bad mother' – we had children of the same age at that time – and 'You are my savior, you are my angel and I'm so bad' and so on and so forth. And in a way I probably, unconsciously, I accepted her thing. I mean I accepted the split that she made between me and her...

**Dr. Dave:** Sure.

**Tamar Kron:** ... and then I had this dream that I'm walking down the street in the center of Jerusalem and all the shops are closed, so I realized it's Shabbat, you know, our Saturday...

**Dr. Dave:** Yes.

**Tamar Kron:** ...and there is no one on the street and there I see her coming from down there, coming towards me and we go one towards the other and as we come closer, I see that she is dressed with my clothes and she asks me 'Tamar why do we meet on Shabbat?' and I say 'Because I promised you.' That was the dream.

**Dr. Dave:** What did that dream mean to you?

**Tamar Kron:** You know I worked on this dream and thought about this dream for a long time and first I realized it's a dialogue, it's a dialogue between us. Then I

realized that it's not that I'm the good mother and she's the bad mother because she's dressed with my clothes, which means that she's me, in a way right?

**Dr. Dave:** Yes.

**Tamar Kron:** And I realized that we have, both of us, have the two poles – she's the good mother and the bad mother and I am also the good mother and the bad mother.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes. Yep that...

**Tamar Kron:** And this helped me, in helping her, coming out of her split, you see.

**Dr. Dave:** O.K.

**Tamar Kron:** You know I told her and then... she suffered from post partum depression, a delayed post partum depression, which really lasted for six years or so. Her child was six years old at the time.

**Dr. Dave:** Oh, my goodness.

**Tamar Kron:** Yeah, so I started to tell her about what a mother I am, you know, that sometimes I get angry and I shout at my boy and it's not that I'm always the very best mother in the world and so on and slowly, slowly we came to the point where she could, you know, realize her pole of the good mother and her behavior changed.

**Dr. Dave:** Oh, that's wonderful.

**Tamar Kron:** This for me was really a turning point and it opened the way, you know, to the Jungian training, to learning the Jungian theory.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes.

**Tamar Kron:** Especially dreams, I am enthusiastic about dreams.

**Dr. Dave:** Right, me too as you know and that's how we ended up meeting at a dream conference for sure.

**Tamar Kron:** Yeah, right.

**Dr. Dave:** Now, in your work as a Jungian analyst, would you say that you've specialized in working with couples? I mean you've written this book called *The Archetypal Couple* and you give a case example or two in every chapter...

**Tamar Kron:** Yeah.

**Dr. Dave:** ...so is that your specialty would you say?

**Tamar Kron:** Well, you know, I work with individuals, I even work with groups but my warm point is for couples and it's interesting because when you try to look for something written about couples by Jungian writers, you don't find much. I mean you

really find very little. Jung himself wrote one, only one article about *Marriage as a Psychological Relationship*, that's the name of the article and I have this feeling that... you know, there are so many myths about couples, in the Indian mythology, in the Greek mythology, in the Jewish mythology... I mean the Old Testament, the Bible and in many... and of course, the big Northern myths and the German mythology and the old German mythology and I'm sure that in many other mythologies. So I believe these myths live within us. You know, at first I wanted to call the book *Mythology in the Bedroom* but then I decided, it's a little... well, you know, it doesn't fit the book like that (laughter).

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, yeah. Now you and I, you know, met and hung out as friends and so I really have... I got to meet you in a different way in reading your book and I must say I'm in awe of your scholarship, that you're a scholar and clearly a scholar and intellectual and you've really studied mythology. Having said that you write about the couple archetype and myth – in a broad way what would you say, what is the couple archetype and how is it illuminated in myth?

**Tamar Kron:** Ah, well in a broad way like you say... again the couple archetype is not mentioned by Jung, I must say, either by other Jungians but I believe there is a couple archetype. It's mentioned by Jung in another, in another way, when he talks about the coniunctio.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes.

**Tamar Kron:** When he talks about the Holy Marriage and in his book on transference he brings the *Rosarium* and the *Rosarium*, which is... he interprets the *Rosarium* as a symbolic way to describe the psychotherapy... not only the psychotherapy... also the... you would call it the psychological relationship and the coniunctio... the king and the queen, they unite at the end of the *Rosarium* and there is this spiritual creature hovering over them because the coniunctio is the marriage on the earth and the marriage up there. And in Kabbalah, in our Jewish Kabbalah, there is the same idea. In the Kabbalah it is said that every togetherness of the couple down on earth, is a togetherness of the God and the Shekinah – the Shekinah is the female part of God – up there in the sky would you say. So I think it's actually we are talking about the couple archetype.

**Dr. Dave:** O.K. well lets uh... I was also struck by a statement that you made that myth does not offer solutions to our essential problems, or offer guidance in any particular direction and so that raises the question 'Well, what's it good for then?' Can you say a little bit about that?

**Tamar Kron:** Yeah, I think I'm saying it in the book in every chapter – it's true, myth doesn't lend us solution, I mean it's not a... you know when you read mythology you're not reading a book of 'how to.' How to solve your problems – but what it gives you, it gives you a widening of your, I would say, narrow life. When you are feeling that you are cornered, yeah, when you are feeling that you are cornered in your life and in your problems and there is this myth, which tells about archetypes, I would say, symbolically you feel that you are not alone in this world. You feel that your problems are connected to human problems all over the world and in all times and you can also feel the spiritual dimension. For example there is a chapter in my

book on Hephaestus and Aphrodite, who are a very strange couple. Aphrodite is disgusted by Hephaestus.

**Dr. Dave:** yeah, I'm gonna ask you about that further on, so let's not go into detail about that one yet but I... that's kind of in the last chapter of your book and I certainly understand what you're saying about getting a broader view of our life through myth and also I think Shakespeare is very good on that in his tragedies and speaking of it connecting to our lives, I'm sure you've heard of medical school syndrome in which medical students experience all the symptoms of the diseases that they're learning about and I experienced something similar as I was reading in your book.

**Tamar Kron:** Uh, huh.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, I was seeing a bit of myself in not only the myths but also the case histories with the couples.

**Tamar Kron:** Uh, huh (laughter).

**Dr. Dave:** Was not entirely comfortable (laughter).

**Tamar Kron:** Yes but in a way it's like... I think it opens the way to think, you know, to think in a different way about your life and about your couple relationship because myths are also paradoxical like the archetype and they bring to you the poles, you know...

**Dr. Dave:** Yes.

**Tamar Kron:** ...the two poles.

**Dr. Dave:** Right. Now, you mentioned the alchemical idea of coniunctio and what's the relationship between Jung's idea of the inner marriage and the outer marriage? Even if we've done a lot of work on the inner marriage of owning our anima and our animus, it seems like we still have a strong yearning for an actual outer partner. Do you find that to be true?

**Tamar Kron:** Just tell me what is your main point in your question.

**Dr. Dave:** Well, I asked you two questions I guess (laughter).

**Tamar Kron:** Yeah ok (both laugh).

**Dr. Dave:** So you can talk about Jung's idea of the inner marriage and the outer marriage first I guess, so say a little bit more about that. What's the relationship between the two?

**Tamar Kron:** I can say even if Jung didn't say it, that we have a developmental process here and I also describe this in my book. In the first stages we project so much of our inner poles and of our inner archetypes on the partner and don't see the partner as he or she is in reality and this of course makes the relationship unreal in

many, many ways and it must bring to a catastrophe and to the disappointment, to crisis. It usually happens in mid-life but sometimes it happens earlier.

**Dr. Dave:** Hm, hm. Yes.

**Tamar Kron:** When your partner doesn't fit all your projections, of course the partner projects on you too and there is no real inner marriage or real outer marriage. Now when you take back your projections and this is a very long and painful process and I have to add here that mythology helps you in this. I mean the therapist can use mythology in helping taking back the projections. When you take most of your projections... because even Jung says, you never take all the projections back and you start to see your partner... the real person, and you start to get into real dialogue with your partner and not an imagined dialogue which is actually with your inner animus or anima, then there can be a real inner marriage and a real outer marriage. I mean, they fit together. Did I say it clearly?

**Dr. Dave:** Yes, you did say it clearly and my follow up point that I asked before was that even if you... let's say that you're not in an outer marriage but you've been doing a lot of work on yourself and getting in touch with your inner anima or animus and you know and just doing a lot of inner work, it seems like that's... well, that's helpful and necessary in the developmental process, it's no substitute for an actual outer partner. That's my opinion.

**Tamar Kron:** Sure.

**Dr. Dave:** There's still that yearning for a real partner.

**Tamar Kron:** Sure.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah.

**Tamar Kron:** Sure. In couples therapy most of this inner work is done with the couple.

**Dr. Dave:** Hm, hm.

**Tamar Kron:** ...and I can tell you that it's really a very deep and moving experience to sit with a couple and one of them is talking or bringing a dream and the other listens and you can see on the face of the listener how moving it is for him or her and how many times it's like a new experience.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, now because there is no body of Jungian theory about couples work, I gather and because Jung didn't write about it very much I'm wondering have you developed your own theory or your own approach to working with couples and if so is that something that you can briefly describe.

**Tamar Kron:** Yeah, in the first chapter of my book *The Archetypal Couple* I bring what I call the life cycle of the couple. A couple has a life cycle like an individual and it's not every couple fits exactly to the stages of this life cycle but you can find it, I would say, in most couples and the first stage is the blind love. Blind love is

actually a love of projections. You fall in love with your projected anima or animus, with your inner figure, I call it the figure of the dreams.

**Dr. Dave:** That's the stage that we call infatuation and it's interesting that if that's all projection... that it's interesting that we get so high off that (laughter) that we get so wonderfully excited and the world is magical.

**Tamar Kron:** Yeah, right and then you also feel that you are so similar to each other, you are so much like each other, it's like our twin is there and you were born to be together and so on and so forth and each one of you tries to fit him or herself into that image of the other. Of course this doesn't hold for long, right?

**Dr. Dave:** Right.

**Tamar Kron:** So the next stage will be awakening from the dream, I would say and this usually entails disappointment and even despair and there is the big crisis. So usually couples come at this stage and usually only one of them... one of them is the first to be in that crisis and the other one would react to that. Or one of them would like to change something and tries to change and the other one would do all the manipulations not to change, to bring the other back to the former position, the former behavior. Here the therapist can intervene, I mean, this is the work of the therapist you know, to show both partners how they continue to project, show that one is moving and the other is trying to block and the main thing is to give them hope, you know, to give them hope that they can come out of that crisis, there is hope in this crisis.

**Dr. Dave:** Uh, huh.

**Tamar Kron:** And that the way to come to a better state of... to a better couple life will be to realize who your partner really is and then to try to get them to this open dialogue, one with the other. You would be amazed to know how many couples after twenty years or so of living together, when they are in therapy, reveal you know, thoughts and dreams and even experiences and the other would say 'Oh, I never knew this... from you.'

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah (laughter).

**Tamar Kron:** So it brings hope of a new life. I would say that when you get to this part of the dialogue you are in the third stage, you are coming out of the crisis.

**Dr. Dave:** O.K. Moving back to myth and so on, I particularly like the section in which you talked about fairy tales dealing with embracing the hag, or kissing the monster and what that means for us in terms of growth in the relationship. How does that relate to what you were just saying about the stages?

**Tamar Kron:** Yeah, you know, I love this fairy tale about the frog. There are two versions of this fairy...

**Dr. Dave:** Me too

**Tamar Kron:** Ha, ha, you too? (laughter).

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, yeah. I've often... If we're talking about the same one – I'm thinking of the one where the princess drops her golden ball into the pond and I've referred to that a lot in my teaching over the years.

**Tamar Kron:** But you know that there are two versions of it?

**Dr. Dave:** No, I don't, go ahead.

**Tamar Kron:** Yeah, one is the German – the Grimm's Brothers' brutal version but it's a very interesting one and one is ah, you know, the sweeter one (laughter).

**Dr. Dave:** Yes, yes, right.

**Tamar Kron:** Because it... in the German original version what happens is that the princess gets into a rage and she takes this frog and throws the frog brutally on the wall...

**Dr. Dave:** Oh, yes I do...

**Tamar Kron:** ...and by that, by that, the kind of position that he is in, he is free from it and lo and behold this frog on the wall becomes the prince, comes out as the prince. So we are talking here about aggression, you know.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes.

**Tamar Kron:** About a rage, which is a rage... an authentic rage, you know. When you allow yourself to be angry and to express your anger and you don't swallow it and you know and hide it and then it boils inside you and you can, you know, get sick and by the act of... Can I tell a little something about the case that I had just this day...

**Dr. Dave:** Sure.

**Tamar Kron:** ...relating to this?

**Dr. Dave:** Yes.

**Tamar Kron:** So here is this couple, they are married now for about 20 years and have four children and he is this kind of sweet, kind man. Everybody loves him, you know, he would never harm anybody and the wife is the more active – he's a little passive – the wife is more active, assertive and of course she is way... maybe aggressive, you would call it.

**Dr. Dave:** O.K.

**Tamar Kron:** Now she gets really... he makes her crazy with his nice way and his being this sweet man, right but she feels that underneath it, there is so much aggression, so much anger. So she starts to... in the sessions she starts to...



sometimes she has this ah... she bursts out with her being, so... um, how would I call it? She gets into real despair when she tries to, you know, to move him and to get him out of this attitude – attitude of victimizing himself in a way, you know.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, so she gets frustrated and angry?

**Tamar Kron:** Yeah, frustrated and angry and then he says ‘Oh, if you leave me I will commit suicide.’

**Dr. Dave:** Uh, huh.

**Tamar Kron:** Can you imagine? So she gets really furious: ‘What are you doing, what is this kind of manipulation?’

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah.

**Tamar Kron:** ‘Again, you’re going the same way, you victimize yourself as if...’ I mean this is not... this is an unconscious manipulation, of course... ‘and here you are, you present yourself as being completely dependent on me and now I am stuck here, with this kind of dependence.’ See?

**Dr. Dave:** Yes.

**Tamar Kron:** So when I intervene I show him... show both of them, the pattern because this goes on and on, again and again and again and again. Whenever she tries to, you know, to move him from this place where he is, he would manipulate his victimization – ‘as if’ victimization and then it gets stuck again.

**Dr. Dave:** Is seeing the pattern sufficiently powerful to bring about change? You know that’s one sort of criticism that...

**Tamar Kron:** I think that, yes. I think yes, I think so.

**Dr. Dave:** Hm. Hm.

**Tamar Kron:** I think that when, for example, in this case the husband realizes that his pattern is just making things worse and if he’s really motivated to change. Of course a therapist can’t do anything without the patient being motivated to change, then he will move.

**Dr. Dave:** O.K. You have a nice way of stating profound insights very simply. For example I like your statement in the book that our intimate relationships are ruled by two opposing needs – the need for security and the need for stability, on the one hand and the need for excitement and unpredictability. Can you say a bit about these two poles and the role they play in relationship difficulties?

**Tamar Kron:** Yes, I must say that I learned it from Stephen Mitchell. He writes about it in his book *Can Love Last?* You know this book?

**Dr. Dave:** I don’t.

**Tamar Kron:** Yeah, well, it's worth reading this book and he believes and I believe too that in each of us we have these opposing wishes you know?

**Dr. Dave:** Hm, hm.

**Tamar Kron:** In one way, we wish to have the confidence that this relationship is forever and we have this... we wish for stability, we wish for a kind of, I would say, the wish... like the baby's wish that the mother will always be there – always, always, always, be there whenever the baby wants her and she will forever be there and cuddle him and feed him, whenever he needs it. This is a very deep wish, an early wish that is with us all our life but on the other hand, we have the opposing wish to you know, to get excitement in life, to find something new to get out of our usual routine and someone would come and bring us new colors into our life.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, yeah, I can certainly identify with both of those poles.

**Tamar Kron:** Everyone can.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, yeah. You do a beautiful job of exploring the biblical myth of Adam and Eve as it relates to couples and it's a myth that I'm sure everyone is familiar with and at the same time as you point out it's also quite mysterious and you unpack so many meanings from it that that one story could take up all of our time in this interview. So rather than do that, let me ask you to focus just on the element of the serpent. So many of us have snake dreams – I myself used to have many snake dreams. So tell us about the significance of the serpent in the Adam and Eve myth as it relates to couples.

**Tamar Kron:** Well you know there is the conventional story, which was used by Rabbis, Priests, whoever... the aim of which is to keep the gates closed, I would say.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, or maintain a power structure.

**Tamar Kron:** Yeah, right and this conventional myth – the story about the couple in the Garden of Eden and in the Garden of Eden, they are in the hand, you know, like children of God and they have no knowledge. Knowledge means actually being aware – self awareness and consciousness and they live there very happily because they are unaware, right?

**Dr. Dave:** Yes.

**Tamar Kron:** And here comes the serpent, like a third element into... he ruptures the two, he ruptures this kind of idyllic... I would say even actually the couple in the Garden of Eden is in many ways similar to the first stage that we talked about before, you know, the blind love.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah and actually I'm realizing it's similar to the frog story that we talked about before.

**Tamar Kron:** Right, right, right, right, you're right. That's why I like the German brutal version more than the one that the princess kisses the frog and there he is a prince.

**Dr. Dave:** So there's always two stories – there's the nice sweet story and then there's the darker Jungian story.

**Tamar Kron:** Yeah, right. So the serpent here is considered by the Judeo-Christian tradition as a, you know, the negative element, the Satan, the evil, you know and the serpent brought the fall.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes.

**Tamar Kron:** This fall that now we are doomed, you know and so on and so forth.

**Dr. Dave:** Right.

**Tamar Kron:** But you can look at that story from a completely different point of view. You can look at it as a story of transformation. This couple that lives unaware and without consciousness, they're awakened by the serpent that comes in, you know. Serpent stirs this idyllic life and by force brings them to transformation because before they met the serpent and before God threw them out – brutally – out of the Garden of Eden, they didn't even have sex, they didn't even have children. It all started after they were thrown out – after the fall. Would you say that having sex and having children is that fall?

**Dr. Dave:** No.

**Tamar Kron:** Ha, ha right? (laughter).

**Dr. Dave:** Right.

**Tamar Kron:** And you know when we look at the symbols of the apple and the tree these are symbols also in individuation and transformation, they're of the Self.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes.

**Tamar Kron:** All this comes when the serpent comes in and so and the serpent is a symbol of transformation because the serpent sloughs his skin every year and then new skin grows up, grows on... right?

**Dr. Dave:** Right.

**Tamar Kron:** That's why the serpent is also the symbol of medicine and of healing.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes.

**Tamar Kron:** Even though the serpent can kill you, very easily. So the serpent is paradoxical like all the archetypes and all the symbols.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes, yes. That's such a different take on the serpent and the whole Garden of Eden story. I really appreciate your take on it. I could have used that years ago, when I was... well, I don't want to go too deeply into the story but I was being confronted by an angry father of a young woman with whom I was involved and he trotted out the story of the Garden of Evil to impress upon me how wicked sex was and I felt he was wrong but I didn't have the tools at my disposal then to give a good rebuttal. Now lots of listeners will be familiar with Pygmalion from *My Fair Lady* which tells the story of a professor who tries to win a bet by remaking a girl from the lower classes into someone who can pass as upper class. As we already observed there seem to always be two stories – the actual Pygmalion myth is somewhat different than that. So tell us about Pygmalion and Galatea as it relates to relationships.

**Tamar Kron:** Pygmalion... I call him a new stage of Narcissus, you know.

**Dr. Dave:** A new stage of what?

**Tamar Kron:** Narcissus.

**Dr. Dave:** Oh, yes, yes, O.K. a further development from the narcissistic position.

**Tamar Kron:** Cause you can say that Pygmalion is not in love with himself but he's in love with his creation and why did he create this beautiful sculpture – woman sculpture – because he couldn't love any living woman on earth, right?

**Dr. Dave:** O.K.

**Tamar Kron:** So it's a narcissistic kind of love.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes.

**Tamar Kron:** And of course it symbolizes your image, the image you have inside and that you project on the women outside, or men. You can take Pygmalion from the woman's point of view or from the man's point of view. It doesn't matter and a woman can also be a Pygmalion.

**Dr. Dave:** So this is where we try to shape our partner to fit our... that projection that we have.

**Tamar Kron:** Right, right. You project your inner image and then you try to make the partner fit into that image – to shape the partner. And many times partners would shape themselves, you know, in order to be accepted and loved, right?

**Dr. Dave:** Right.

**Tamar Kron:** But then what happens and this is the... I describe it also in the chapter about Pygmalion it can of course happen that Galatea... after Pygmalion asked Aphrodite to help him and to bring this sculpture to life and she became a real woman, they lived happily after but who says they lived happily after? Maybe Galatea one day woke up and said 'Hey I don't want to be shaped any more, you

know. I don't want your projections on me. I want to live my life – my real life, my real self.' And or Pygmalion would be bored with this creature that he shaped, he shaped it so nicely that now it's boring, you know. And also the couple can be Pygmalion. The couple has an image – how a couple will be – and then they shape themselves according to the image.

**Dr. Dave:** You know some people have pointed out that we live a lot longer than we used to and so consequently we live with that marriage partner a long time.

**Tamar Kron:** Right.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, what's the... where's that fit in with all this? I mean it adds to the challenge I would think if we're continuing to grow, continuing to develop. Maybe what worked at one stage of our life no longer works at another stage?

**Tamar Kron:** Right. It goes in circles. Individuation also goes in circles, it's not linear, you know. It's like a spiral. And the couples individuation, you can call it, is also not going in a linear way, it goes in circles and it's a spiral.

**Dr. Dave:** Now you talked about hope earlier, do you ever see divorce as a positive outcome of therapy?

**Tamar Kron:** Sometimes, yes and sometimes, no. I can't say, you know, it depends on, like I said, the motivation of both partners to change and it depends also on the rate of the changing because one can change very quickly and the other very slowly and then it's a problem. And you know sometimes there are situations, for example, of violence, or treating the children brutally by one of the partners, which I then would say that divorce is the best solution ever, you know.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, sure. Well you started to, earlier on, to talk about something, I said 'Oh, let's put that off' and I was referring to your final chapter, which is on 'attraction through repulsion,' which is interesting. Often when couples talk about how they first met – on quiz shows, or things like that, or in gatherings of friends, the woman, or the man, will say 'I couldn't stand him or her at first. I would have said this is the last person I would marry.' So, and then there's the common wisdom that says opposites attract, so tell us about 'attraction through repulsion' and what mythology tells us about that.

**Tamar Kron:** Well, you know, we're repulsed by our shadow – that part that we don't like about ourselves – that we try to suppress and repress. That we don't like it, our persona doesn't like it, you know the way we would like to see ourselves and show ourselves to the outside world and many times in the shadow, part there are buried parts of us that are important to us – maybe creativity, maybe different parts of us that should go into the light and usually when we meet someone in a party or somewhere else, this someone is our shadow or are presenting our shadow. At first we are repulsed and disgusted but as time goes on and we get maybe closer to that person, we start to feel attracted because of the shadow, because we can find in this person the parts that are buried in us and that we don't dare, you know, dare to express and then the repulsion is turned into attraction. And the opposite happens too – we're attracted to a person and exactly because that person represents opposite, the

opposite pole of us and then we get repulsed by that same person. This happens many times.

**Dr. Dave:** I think you made reference to a myth – Hestia and who?

**Tamar Kron:** No, Hephaestus.

**Dr. Dave:** Oh, O.K. Thank you.

**Dr. Dave:** Hephaestus and Aphrodite. Aphrodite was the goddess of love – a beautiful, beautiful Goddess of love and sexual attraction and Hephaestus was the ugliest god there and he was actually... his legs were hit when his mother Hera threw him down from the sky because she was so angry that he was so ugly, this baby was so ugly. But he learned... ah, you know, he was very good with his hands. He was an artist and he made these beautiful, beautiful, beautiful things for all the gods and once he was so mad at his mother... but he wished, you know, that one day, maybe one day, she will love him. So he made for her a beautiful golden chair but when she sat on the chair she was um, bound by invisible ropes and the chair jumped up to the sky and she started to, you know, to shout ‘Hey, Hephaestus, my son, bring me down to earth’ and he said ‘Only if you give me the most beautiful woman, er, I mean goddess, to marry. I want Aphrodite.’ And she said ‘What! Are you crazy, you are so ugly, you are a monster.’ He said ‘O.K., so you stay up there.’ So in the end she asked her husband Zeus, the king of the God's, to give Aphrodite to Hephaestus. That's how they married but of course this marriage didn't work out because Aphrodite despised Hephaestus. Aphrodite is an extravert and Hephaestus is an introvert. He worked down in his cave on these beautiful things and she liked, you know, to run around and attract every man around – every man and god around.

**Dr. Dave:** This sounds like the man who's in his study, or his workshop, working away at his hobby and the wife can't get his attention.

**Tamar Kron:** Yeah, right – and then the wife starts to look around, you know (laughter).

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah. Just shows how contemporary all of this stuff is. Now. Do you ever make reference to a myth when working with a couple or individual? You know, is the myth just something that you're holding in the back of your mind, or do you actually bring it out?

**Tamar Kron:** Well, it depends. Many times I tell it – I tell it to the couple, or I tell parts of it to the couple but there are times when I hold it in my head until, you know, until it is a good time to tell them, or I would never tell them. There is no recipe for that.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah. Well, coming a full circle – at the beginning you talked about how it was the work of Martin Buber that really brought you to the Jungian camp and I know that you just recently returned from spending time in Germany, studying Martin Buber. I guess there's a Martin Buber library there?

**Tamar Kron:** There is an archive – an archive of...

**Dr. Dave:** An archive.

**Tamar Kron:** Right. There is an archive in Jerusalem – a very big archive but I found out that there is an archive in Frankfurt, where there are letters and texts that we don't have here.

**Dr. Dave:** So this sounds like it might be the next book?

**Tamar Kron:** I hope so. I still have to do lots of work, lots of work has to be done but it might, it might. I did write... I just finished a novel about Jocasta, the mother of Oedipus but it's in Hebrew.

**Dr. Dave:** Aha. Well I remember that in the dream workshop I think you were struggling with that novel, right? You shared a dream with us that related to the struggles with the novel, so that's wonderful that you've gotten through it.

**Tamar Kron:** Yeah, I did, I did. Do you know what helped me?

**Dr. Dave:** I don't.

**Tamar Kron:** Dreams, dreams!

**Dr. Dave:** Really? How so?

**Tamar Kron:** Yeah, dreams helped me because I would get stuck and I wouldn't know how to continue and then a dream would come and show me the way.

**Dr. Dave:** Ah, wonderful.

**Tamar Kron:** Yeah. So I finished it and I hope that it gets published and then who knows, maybe it will be translated into English too like *The Archetypal Couple*.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, that would be great. Well, as we wind down I wonder if there are any final points that you'd like to make?

**Tamar Kron:** The main point that I would like to make is that when a couple gets into this stage of despair, disappointment, even depression, feeling stuck they should go to therapy.

**Dr. Dave:** O.K.

**Tamar Kron:** And you know why I say it? Because in my experience it's about two thirds of the times, even more, the woman would bring the man – unwillingly.

**Dr. Dave:** Right, right.

**Tamar Kron:** And I think men should, you know, change their opinions about therapy and couple therapy.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, O.K. So, they should go to therapy, they should probably travel to Jerusalem to go to therapy (both laugh). O.K. Dr. Tamar Kron, it's great to speak with you again and I want to thank you for being my guest on Shrink Rap Radio.

**Tamar Kron:** And I thank you for bringing me in.

#### **WRAP UP:**

I hope you enjoyed this conversation with Dr. Tamar Kron. I feel so lucky to have had the opportunity to become friends with her, as a result of our interactions at the IASD conference last summer in Berkeley. We bonded as people but at the time I didn't fully appreciate her professional earnestness and achievements. I have to say I'm very impressed by the fact that she's already written three novels and is going to be working on another one, not to mention the book we discussed in this interview.

This book – *The Archetypal Couple* is very readable. In fact, I'd say the tone of it is for the general reader. At the same time however, it's very thoroughly researched in terms of the mythic material she presents. In some ways it reminds me of Jean Bolen's *Goddesses in Everywoman* but Tamar's book strikes me as somewhat deeper and more wide-ranging. Anyone who has read and liked Bolen's books is sure to love this one. Also it will appeal equally, I think, to therapists who work with couples, as well as those who may be struggling in a couples relationship. Each chapter is organized around a myth and then includes a case history from her own work with couples to illustrate how that archetypal influence is being played out in their relationships. Let me give you a feel for her writing by reading a couple of paragraphs from the final chapter.

*Humans have been given a gift – the potential for change and transformation. When this potential is not realized, the human being is fixed in unyielding and unchanging structures. It can be said that he or she was taken over and possessed by the archetype, by the mythical image. This is what happens to legendary heroes when they fall under a spell. They are imprisoned in the skin of an animal or in the mold of a monster, stop developing or changing, remain fixed in a permanent structure. Education and molding, traumas and fears, others' projections and expectations onto and from us – all these things fix us, in closed, limiting structures.*

*It is not for nothing that in myths and fairytales, whoever breaks the spell the hero or heroine is under is invariably a prince or princess, a lover or beloved and it is invariably by an act of love. The prince wakes Beauty who fell asleep on being pricked by the fatal needle and by kissing her, the princess returns to life. The princess breaks the spell that bound the prince to the figure of the frog with her kiss. The prince brings Snow White back to life with his kiss. The power of love is such that it is able to see beauty under the monster's figure and life where there is death.*

*Love and relationship make life flow into the couple's encounter and enables each partner to see his or her transformed self in the other's*



*loving gaze. This loving gaze makes it possible to believe in the possibility of change and transformation.*

End quote.

Tamar's book is available in reasonably priced paperback and Kindle editions in the Amazon.com bookstore. I hope you'll use the Amazon widget in the right hand sidebar on our site to order your copy.

Thanks to my good friend Israeli Jungian analyst Dr. Tamar Kron for sharing her work on the couple archetype.