

Shrink Rap Radio #13, November 13, 2005. Jungian Archetypes and Their Application in Psychotherapy and Consumer Research

Dr. Sharon Livingston interviews Dr. David Van Nuys, aka “Dr. Dave” about Jungian archetypes.

(transcribed from www.ShrinkRapRadio.com by Dale Hoff)

Introduction: Hi again everyone. This is David Van Nuys, aka Dr. Dave, coming to you once again from the beautiful wine country in Sonoma County, California. Shrink Rap Radio is the podcast that speaks from the psychologist in me to the psychologist in you, whether you be amateur, student or professional. It’s all the psychology you need to know and just enough to make you a little bit dangerous. You will recall that in a previous show, I interviewed Psychologist and Consumer Research Consultant, Dr. Sharon Livingston, who is President of the Livingston Group in Windham, New Hampshire. Well, as they say, turnabout is fair play so she, in turn, wanted to interview me for a series on her own website. She was particularly interested in my take on Jungian archetypes and their applicability in consumer research. I thought the interview went well and so I want to share it with you. For some time I’ve been very interested in the work of the Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, Carl Jung, so it’s likely that you will see that interest reflected frequently in this series. Sharon is in New Hampshire and, of course, I’m in California and we recorded the interview over the phone so, once again, I have to apologize for the quality of the audio. We will get this down. So let’s get right into the interview with no further excuses.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Well, Hi everyone. This is Sharon Livingston and welcome back. And today we’re going to be talking to Dr. David Van Nuys, who is a psychologist with experience in different aspects of psychology that I think you’ll find very, very interesting. And he teaches and he does marketing research, qualitative research—online interviews, is that correct, David?

Dr. Dave: Yes. Online chats, online bulletin boards, as well as traditional face-to-face focus groups.

Livingston: Okay, well, really good. Today, I was hoping that we could talk to you a little bit about archetypes. And, to me, that’s still kind of a bogey-bogey place. I’m not sure what it means and how it means even though I’ve played with it

myself and used my own interpretation of what it means. I was hoping that you could talk a little about what that means, you know, what it means in psychology, what it means in psychotherapy and what it might possibly mean in marketing research.

Dr. Dave: Okay.

Livingston: Great.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. Well, the term *archetype* really comes out of the psychology of C. G. Jung, the famous Swiss psychoanalyst who was initially a disciple of Freud and then he and Freud broke from one another. And, Jung's psychology has proven to be a very durable one—one that continues to have a lot of interest and seems well-suited to our time to those people who are familiar with it. So the idea of the archetype is one of the key concepts in Jungian Psychology and its roots probably go back to Plato. Because Plato talked about—we refer to something called *Platonic idealism* where Plato felt that there were these preexisting ideas that exist almost in another realm and that the things that we see in this world are but the dim reflections of the idealized object so that the chair—

Livingston: Right.

Dr. Dave: —that I'm sitting in is but one example of the abstract notion of chairness, if you will.

Livingston: Right.

Dr. Dave: So Jung's version of the archetype is that archetypes are motifs. They are reoccurring motifs or idea image simple categories that come from what he called the collective unconscious and that are universal. They are motifs or themes that resonate with us human beings across cultures, across time. And, he felt that they are probably in our genetic code—in our genetic make-up. And, of course, today we know a lot more about genetics and while those ideas might have sounded outlandish at one time, maybe they still do, but we certainly learned that there is a lot more stored in the genetic code that we realized. As you know, some years back, in the '60s and '70s, behaviorism really held total sway in the field of psychology, at least in academic psychology, with tremendous emphasis placed on learning and the idea that most of who we are was result of things that we learned

from infancy on up. The pendulum has really swung though now to be—in what was known as the nature-nurture controversy and nurture being the learning side of things—and the pendulum has swung to the nature side of things where there's increasing recognition that in many, many ways, we come pre-wired for all sorts of things, pre-wired to learn language. Studies of twins who were reared apart and, therefore, were not exposed to the same learnings and yet when these twins later are reunited and studied by psychologists, they discover incredible similarities between them in terms of the kinds of people that they marry, their food preferences, even, I think, things like brands of products that they use.

Livingston: I think I've heard that actually.

Dr. Dave: Yeah, yeah. There are just amazing correspondences. So the idea that there would be some sort of collective learnings or patterns that had accumulated over the ages of human existence that are somehow embedded in our genes—that's something that, to me, has some resonance, some credibility. Although you might ask and if I'm talking too much, let me know.

Livingston: No, no, no, you're doing great. It's bringing up all kinds of questions for me but go on. I love it.

Dr. Dave: Yeah, you've got me on a roll here.

Livingston: Good.

Dr. Dave: So the question arises, well what do we mean by then—you know, what are these motifs or themes? What sorts of things might be archetypal? Well some of the classic archetypes that Jung and the Jungians refer to, a few of them are the Wise Old Man, the Wise Old Woman or sometimes known as the Crone, the Hero, the Great Mother, the Trickster, the Evil One, the Eternal Child, the Shadow—and I'll say more about the shadow later because I know that was something that you wanted me to talk about. So if we take a look at one of those archetypes, for example, the trickster might be a good one to look at for a moment. The notion of the trickster—it's not about a specific trickster, but we recognize this pattern in—and a lot of this comes from Jung's study of myths, mythology and fairy tails and cross-cultural studies—and you find out, in cultures across the world, there are tales or stories about tricksters—in our cartoons, in our cartoon vocabulary of, oh,

Daffy Duck or Bugs Bunny—classic tricksters. And the Native American stories, I think there, Coyote is a figure that recurs as a trickster figure. I'm trying to think of other examples.

Livingston: What's the function of a trickster?

Dr. Dave: Well, that's a good question. The trickster also is closely related to another archetype, which I would call the Fool, or the Wise Fool and, in both cases, I think the function is to wake us up, to wake us up by teasing, mocking, making fun of or surprising us. The trickster may manifest itself in terms of little accidents in our lives that we somehow unconsciously create. Some people have trickster type personality. I mean, you can probably think of some people, you know, in your own life that you've known who were tricksters—who liked playing jokes, playing tricks, being provocative or surprising.

Livingston: Like, in college, the guys who put the Saran Wrap on the toilet seat.

Dr. Dave: Yeah, you know, that's, at a very everyday level, that's certainly a tricksterish type thing. But the tricksters also can refer to an element in our personalities that trips us up. And a lot of these archetypes really, they have both a positive and a negative aspect, a positive and a negative potential. And so the positive aspect of the trickster is that it kind of gives us these wake-up calls or thrusts a different perspective in our face. And the negative aspect is probably that we sometimes do stupid things, things that seem stupid in terms of our intentions, in terms of our intentionality.

Livingston: Is there a finite number of archetypes?

Dr. Dave: Probably not. There's no one specific list that we can say that, okay, these are the archetypes. Rather, there's just so many different situations that we could think of as archetypal. For example, people sitting in a circle around a fire. That's an archetypal thing because people have been sitting in circles around the fire since time began. And if you've ever gone camping—have you had some experience where you sat around the fire?

Livingston: Sure.

Dr. Dave: And maybe you had some intimation of being in a long chain of human history, of just kind of feeling that subtle resonance of some kind of a click, you know, of a certain rightness about being in that configuration. And, there is something about the configuration, in fact, of a circle. Jung felt that the circle is a symbol of wholeness. It calls us to—it suggests completeness and wholeness.

Livingston: And among the most powerful logos in the world are ones that include a circle.

Dr. Dave: Yeah, yeah. So and I forgot where I was going—oh , we were talking about whether or not there are a finite number of archetypes.

Livingston: You were saying about sitting in a circle, like at a campfire, brings you to something that goes beyond that experience and like alluding to the collective unconscious about that experience.

Dr. Dave: Right. That we have all these patterns, I believe, that are stored in our unconscious. For example, a doorway—a doorway is a very archetypal thing, a gate is an archetypal thing because it has symbolic significance. First of all, doorways and gates have always been there, I think, throughout human history so, presumably, there's some kind of a collective imprint there. But also in their very nature, they have a symbolic potency of what it means to pass through a doorway, which suggests transition, moving from one space to another, from one stage to another, one from life stage or one spiritual stage to another.

Livingston: Moving into life, being born.

Dr. Dave: Yeah, right. We pass through a doorway through that first arch. The pelvic arch—

Livingston: Right.

Dr. Dave: —is a doorway. So we could just keep generating ideas and I think between us we could come up with a lot of archetypal ideas and it's really hard to set down the ultimate—

Livingston: The ultimate number.

Dr. Dave: —definitive list. Right.

Livingston: You're reminding me. Many years ago—I've been in my own psychoanalysis and therapy for forever and to me it's like the best education you can get is to work on yourself, you know, to keep doing that—and I had a dream many years ago that I'd forgotten until we were just talking—and it was so obvious like I had to laugh when I woke up—but I was going down a waterslide. It was a pink, wavy waterslide and I was just merrily going along down this waterslide until I got to the bottom.

Dr. Dave: And, what is it that causes you to bring that up in this context?

Livingston: Well, it was a doorway thing and, you know, I was going through the birth canal.

Dr. Dave: Right, okay. But there is another archetypal element in the dream as well, which is the journey down, which—Joseph Campbell, who was interviewed by Bill Moyers on public TV some years ago and some people listening to this perhaps would be familiar with that very wonderful series of interviews with Joseph Campbell whose seminal work is a book called *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*,

Livingston: Right.

Dr. Dave: And in that, he describes—he collects these myths and fairy tales from all over the world across time and pulls out this common pattern of the hero's journey and the hero's journey is one that is, initially, a journey down. And the journey down symbolizes the journey into the deep self, if you will, or into the unconscious and into the areas that we would call the shadow, those areas that we don't see clearly for ourselves and that are full of things that we deem to be scary. But also what the myths teach us is that that's where the treasure lies.

Livingston: Now, why is that?

Dr. Dave: —even though it's often guarded by scary monsters that have to be passed by.

Livingston: Right, like the pots of gold in all the fairy tales, yeah.

Dr. Dave: This is a symbolic language that we all understand, that human beings resonate to. And that's why these stories exist all over the world. So you might

wonder, well what function does this serve? Why would this be there? Because we know from our studies of evolution that everything seems to be there for a purpose and the purpose is survival of the species, not survival of the individual—because if you saw that penguin movie that was out recently. Did you see that wonderful movie about the penguins?

Livingston: Not yet.

Dr. Dave: Oh, you got to see that. I can't remember the name of it.

Livingston: I know what you mean.

Dr. Dave: *Flight of the Penguins* or something like that.

Livingston: Right.

Dr. Dave: It's beautiful and what you see is that they go through this elaborate set of procedures and this trek across the frozen icecap and just an amazing set of trials and tribulations they go through to survive as a group. And many of the individuals are lost in the process but, as a species, they've survived. This set of procedures that they've developed for living in the harshest of conditions has allowed them to survive as a group. It's often been noted that human beings are a social species. We call our self social animals. But what is it that makes us social animals? What is it that bonds us together and keeps us together in a group? And, I would maintain, from this Jungian perspective that I come from, is that the thing that causes human beings to hang together is a sense of meaning and purpose in the group that we identify with. Some group, whether it's our family, our community, our country—that's what holds us together. You can see this more clearly, I think, in small tribal groups than in our larger, complex society that we're in today. But, we know that when, you know, that if you were Iroquois, if you were growing up Iroquois, you got strong messages about, "We're Iroquois. This is what we do, this is what the Iroquois do. This is what we don't do. Here's how you behave to be an Iroquois." And every little Iroquois child would do their best to embrace that and to fully embody whatever it was to be a member of that group and, of course, there would be initiation rights and processes and so on to fully teach and indoctrinate and embed people in the group. What we know is that when modern civilization impacts these tribal groups, and there aren't that many that are left in the world

now, but through anthropological studies, we know that what has happened is that in the process of contact when a larger, more dominant civilization or technology, that often that smaller tribal group, they lose their story. They lose their myth. It no longer has meaning to them because it's being challenged, you know, by outside influences. When a group of people loses their myth, a very interesting thing happens when they lose their story. Basically, they shrivel up and die. They cease to exist as a people. That social cohesion is lost. And we see time and time again that they die young, the social fabric falls apart, alcoholism and drug abuse become rife, etc.

Livingston: Right. That's true.

Dr. Dave: So, I would maintain that just as—I'm going to take another little digression here. Other animal species have instincts. They are very instinctual. So the salmon somehow knows how to swim across the ocean to get back to its original spawning ground and to struggle upstream against the current leaping up over waterfalls and so on to get back to that original spawning ground—incredibly complex sequence of behavior. Or the spider who can weave a web that's unique to its particular kind of spider or the bird who can build a nest that's recognizable for the kind of bird that it is without being taught how to do these things. Somehow it's programmed in there—in the genetic code. And, the reason that these creatures have these things in their genetic code is that it allows for survival of that species. So I would maintain that our instinct is related to these archetypes, which are containers for key ideas, for key ideas that can be contained in stories and myths and movies and novels and so on and religious teachings, that they're like containers or motifs that can be woven together to create a pattern of meaning, which will then allow us to cohere and survive. I don't think that I've ever said this as well as I'm saying it right now.

Livingston: I like it.

Dr. Dave: I hope other people agree.

Livingston: It's excellent. It seems to me, I mean, like if you look at *Star Wars* or, you know, some of the classic—even in *The Golden Child*—did you ever see that with Eddie Murphy in *The Golden Child*?

Dr. Dave: I did see it. I don't know how clear my recollection will be for it, but go ahead.

Livingston: Do you remember the—

Dr. Dave: I'd do better with Star Wars.

Livingston: Well there was a sage in *The Golden Child* when he goes to Tibet or wherever he's going that's a comic character. And that he's kind of like, he's a trickster and he's kind of a nit that's in his face and it turns out that he's the master. He's like a sage-jester combined.

Dr. Dave: Yeah and Yoda plays that figure in *Star Wars*.

Livingston: Exactly.

Dr. Dave: Did you ever see that early Dustin Hoffman movie *Little Big Man*.

Livingston: Yes.

Dr. Dave: And there was something that was based on, I believe, a real American Indian practice of the guy who walked backwards, did everything backwards. Do you remember that? I think it was in that movie. There was a guy who did everything backwards, walked backwards, did everything backwards, which was, I think, a kind of a trickster sort of element.

Livingston: Well I guess what I'm thinking about is, "are the archetypes like people you can identify who are classically one archetype or another or are the archetypes pieces and parts of our own identity?"

Dr. Dave: I think that we probably all have lots of archetypes within us, maybe all of them. I'm not sure. You know, when you get right down to it, I think we all have the ability to improvise with the full, broad range of human experience. Not everyone has this capability because maybe for reasons of fear, upbringing, unfortunate experiences, they may have walled themselves off in certain ways so that—

Livingston: It might not be socially acceptable for them to acknowledge that they have a trickster inside them, if in their family that was punished or something.

Dr. Dave: Right, or to recognize within themselves the possibility of being a murderer or of being a rapist. I mean, I believe that we all have all of these experiences, possibilities. Both the very positive—I think we all have the possibility of being a Dalai Lama or a serial killer.

Livingston: Or a Dolly Parton.

Dr. Dave: Or a Dolly Parton, right.

[laughter]

Dr. Dave: So, you know, we're all from the same stuff, from the same basic stuff and these sorts of impulses and aspirations are roiling around in all of us.

Livingston: So, are you aware of that in yourself?

Dr. Dave: I would have to say, "Yes."

Livingston: Will you let me know when the serial killer and the rapist are around so—

[laughter]

Dr. Dave: Well, you know I co-authored a book about a serial killer.

Livingston: I know, I know. Tell us about that a little bit.

Dr. Dave: That's why that example is so close to hand. And I felt that—to get into that book—my job was to profile, was to try to develop a psychological profile of, the serial killer—so I felt the only way I could do that would be if I could identify with him in some degree so I could get inside his head and understand the kinds of things that might be motivating him.

Livingston: You know, I've always thought that when we disown any aspect of a possible self, that's when we get into trouble. It's not when you own it, it's when you disown it.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. That's when you get into trouble.

Livingston: Right.

Dr. Dave: Like the example that I have often given to students, I mean, the really scary people are the true believers, I have to say, the people who think they have an exclusive hold on truth or goodness, you know, that “we are the good people and we are the people who have the right answers.” And, I often give the example of the Nazis. I don’t think that the Nazis set out to be the baddest people on the face of the earth.

Livingston: Right.

Dr. Dave: It was quite the reverse.

Livingston: Exactly.

Dr. Dave: They felt that they saw how to have a better society and that they had an exclusive hold on truth and, you know, and it was from that place that all the mischief and evil flowed out. So, I think it’s very dangerous when we’re not in touch with our own capacity for evil.

Livingston: You know, I mentioned to you I saw *The Weatherman* last night.

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Livingston: And there’s a part in there where that issue is addressed and it’s very frightening, for a moment, it’s very frightening because you could tell that this guy could kill. And he’s just a regular guy.

Dr. Dave: Right.

Livingston: And it’s not over anything, you know, that you would think would be normal. I mean, you can imagine somebody wanting to kill under many you know, but you could justify it. But this wasn’t justifiable.

Dr. Dave: Right.

Livingston: But he felt rage.

Dr. Dave: Right. Well you know a lot of domestic killings and so on happen in a moment of rage.

Livingston: Right.

Dr. Dave: Without any sort of premeditation or even—yeah, well certainly without premeditation.

Livingston: Right. So I'm just looking at the time and I'm wondering, how do you figure out—first of all, is it important to know what archetype is working at a given moment within yourself and, if it is, how do you figure that out?

Dr. Dave: I would say it was important if you're on this track of self-discovery and—

Livingston: And why should one be?

Dr. Dave: —you're interested in what's going on in yourself and you're trying to grow and to develop and so on. Not everybody is interested in that. Not everybody is on that track and not everybody needs to be.

Livingston: What's the value of doing that kind of growth?

Dr. Dave: The value is potentially becoming most fully yourself, of realizing your fullest potential, of developing parts of yourself, of enriching your experience of life and blogging your experience of life.

Livingston: And so let's say somebody wants to do that, how do they discover their archetypes?

Dr. Dave: Well, usually through psychotherapy, but maybe through reading and workshops and self-examination and, certainly, tracking one's dreams. You know, to get back to your earlier question of, "Do we have all these archetypes within us? Are some people just kind of one archetype?" The notion is that some people are kind of seized by an archetype that often it has to do with an early childhood wound and some kind of archetype—it almost sounds like demon possession in a way. I mean, that is another framework. You know, lots of cultures, people have worried about spirits, evil spirits, and people becoming possessed by spirits. And, in a way, when we say somebody is possessed by an archetype, it's saying something very similar. I'll give you an example of an archetype that I think I've been somewhat possessed by in my life. If there were one archetype that characterizes me, it would be something that Jung referred to as the *puer aeternus*, or the eternal child. And the eternal child has both negative and positive aspects,

the positive being childlike wonder, youthfulness, youthful exuberance. The down sides are that the eternal child in the male might be sort of eternally promiscuous, an eternal adolescent, never growing up, never taking responsibility and so on. So I could see a lot of those qualities in myself and for me the challenge has been to grow from that archetype into moving towards the archetype of—oh, and I'm blocking on the name of it, there's similarly a Latin name—but basically it's the wise older man. And I believe that there is that potential to flip the archetype through a process of self-awareness and sort of self-confrontation.

Livingston: So would that child that you're talking about be a shadow?

Dr. Dave: Well, there could be shadow aspects. Let's talk about the shadow. I know that was something that you are interested in. The *shadow*, which is another piece of Jungian terminology and there are some weird, there's some words, some of the Jungian terms sound pretty foreign to the ear at first, notions like the *shadow*, the *animas*, the *anima* and so on. There is some terminology that is kind of unique to the Jungian perspective, although the idea of the shadow was kind of popularized in a way by the *Star Wars* movies when they talk about the Dark Side. In Jungian terms, the shadow is an archetype that has both a collective and a personal aspect. When we talk about the collective shadow at an archetypal level, then we're talking about Satan, the devil, you know, that sense of the Evil One that we have to guard against, demons, the Great Evil. And, of course, we tend to project that. So that, you know, the Islamic extremists look at America as the Great Satan and, for our part, we're looking at them as the Great Satan.

Livingston: Right.

Dr. Dave: So that kind of projection happens both ways and, unfortunately, there's a proclivity for human groups for the group to project on an outsider group that they are evil that the stranger catches these projections of being evil. At a personal level, our personal shadow refers to the elements in our own personalities that we see as undesirable and that we choose to put down and sort of hide from ourselves, if you will. And the problem with that—there are two problems with that—is the things that we are unaware of in our personality that other people can see—usually other can see our shadow or at least, certain parts of our shadow that we can't see, so other people can see traits that we have that are negative or self-destructive and

we tend not to be able to see those things in ourselves but quite often we project them and we do see them very easily in somebody else.

Livingston: Right.

Dr. Dave: There was a classic study years ago that was done in a fraternity. Psychologists or sociologists went into a fraternity and asked all the fraternity brothers to rate one another on their stinginess and also to rate themselves. So everybody had to do a self-rating and to rate everybody else on the characteristic of stinginess. And what happened was that there were one or two brothers who all the other brothers rated very high on stinginess. Those two brothers rated themselves very low on stinginess, however, but saw all the other brothers as much more stingy than they themselves were. So in other words, that's sort of a simple experiment that seems to show this projection process at work.

Livingston: Right.

Dr. Dave: So the idea is we all have a shadow part of ourselves that we tend not to be in touch with.

Livingston: It would seem to me that if that's operating, not only is there an evaluation of someone as being more so than you are but there's an energy around it where we're judging it.

Dr. Dave: It's something we judge in ourselves negatively

Livingston: Right.

Dr. Dave: And then those negative judgments get projected outward.

Livingston: Right.

Dr. Dave: Now in Jungian therapy, we talk about eating the shadow.

Livingston: I never heard that before.

Dr. Dave: The need to eat it, which talks really about the mythic journey going down into the darkness confronting the scary, shadowy places in ourselves because what the myths tell us is that's where the gold is, that's where the pot of gold is, that's where the pearl is. So in the stuff that we have learned to despise about

ourselves, there may be a pearl, it may in fact have our strength, something that would be really important for us if we could own it and manifest it in a more positive way in our lives instead of trying to suppress it and judging it.

Livingston: Do you know of Carol Pearson? Do you know who Carol Pearson is?

Dr. Dave: I'm not sure. The name sounds vaguely familiar.

Livingston: If you go to CAPT, you know, the organization that does the MBTI and the Myers-Brigg test, they also have an archetypal test that you can take.

Dr. Dave: Oh, really?

Livingston: And there's this woman named Carol Pearson who created a test of archetypes, you know, what's working in you at any given moment and how you identify your shadow side and, you know, what your strengths are blah blah blah.

Dr. Dave: Okay. I'm not familiar with that.

Livingston: Well she has twelve archetypes. There's the Innocent and the Orphan, and like you said they all have strengths and weaknesses. There's the Caretaker or like the Mother or Guardian Angel and the Warrior and—I get lost in the middle sometimes. I don't have them all memorized.

Dr. Dave: Right, but those all sound like—yeah, as we were saying, there's no finite list, there's no one agreed-upon list and those certainly all sound like classic forms.

Livingston: Well, the reason I was asking is that I'm wondering the relationship of, like, the Myers-Briggs tests, you know, the sixteen personality types?

Dr. Dave: Yeah?

Livingston: Is there a relationship of those personality types, which also come out of Jungian Psychology, to archetypes?

Dr. Dave: I'm not sure.

Livingston: Okay.

Dr. Dave: I don't know. Of all the Jungian stuff that I'm interested in, I've been least interested in typology. And typology refers to introvert-extravert—

Livingston: Sensing vs. intuiting, thinking-feeling and judging-perceiving.

Dr. Dave: Right. My typology is of the type that rejects typology.

Livingston: That means you're a Capricorn.

Dr. Dave: Huh?

Livingston: That means you're a Capricorn.

Dr. Dave: No. Actually I'm a Taurus.

Livingston: That probably fits then.

Dr. Dave: But see my typology doesn't let me get into astrology—

Livingston: I know, I know. That's why I said you're a Capricorn.

Dr. Dave: —Because that's a typology, even though I have friends who've gotten deeply into all of that. But, you know, I have gotten into the tarot as you know.

Livingston: So talk about that a little.

Dr. Dave: Okay. But the tarot is not a typology as I see it. I use the tarot, not for fortune-telling purposes, but rather, you know, if we were having this discussion about archetypes in person, I would be tempted to bring out the tarot deck and say, “oh, well, take a look at these cards. These here are some archetypal images.” Tarot cards are just pieces of cardboard that have pictures printed on them and, you know, they are not evil and they don't have any—they are just pieces of cardboard with pictures. But the pictures depict classic situations that tend to resonate with people that they can recognize. Oh, here's a heroic looking person, here's a king, here's a queen. Well, the idea of king or emperor—that immediately elicits all sorts of associations having to do with father, god, president, authority, wisdom, perhaps the negative sides of authority—cruelty, injustice.

Livingston: How many cards are there?

Dr. Dave: Oh boy, ask me a hard question. Seventy-eight, I believe. Fifty-six—

Livingston: Wow. I didn't know that.

Dr. Dave: It's thought that the playing cards that everybody's familiar with evolved from the tarot. So, the fifty-six cards come from what, in the tarot, are called the Lower Arcana and there are an additional twenty-two cards called the Higher Arcana that are much more symbolic and evocative and seem to relate to stages of spiritual growth. So I use the cards in a projective way, you know, coming from the background of a psychologist where we have things like the Thematic Apperception Test, the TAT, or the Rorschach, the inkblot test, where we show people some images that sometimes are vague or evocative and ask them, "well, what do you see here?" And, of course, what they see says a lot about what their underlying concerns and preoccupations are about. Well, the tarot is a wonderful stimulus for that sort of thing and you know that in consumer research, people are using, you know—they are putting together decks of pictures that they've cut out of magazines and other places where they've gotten pictures to get consumers to respond to what they see in the pictures. You know, which of these pictures do you like? Which of these pictures characterize this product that we're talking about? Dove soap—Which of these pictures somehow capture the feeling that you have when you think of Dove soap and which ones are really very opposite to the feelings that you have about Dove soap? And, that this is a way of getting people to think about to evoke things that they maybe haven't quite been able to articulate but when they see these images it somehow summons up some ideas.

Livingston: So, do you think there is a role for using archetypes in understanding brands and perceptions of brands?

Dr. Dave: Well, I understand that some people have been moving in that direction and I have to say I'm not terribly informed what they've been doing or how they've been doing that and I'm also a little bit leery about it. I have been reluctant to go very far in terms of using depth psychological tools in market research because I'm just not sure that, ethically, I feel good about it.

Livingston: Say more about that.

Dr. Dave: Well, I believe that people's interior lives, you know—that people have a right to privacy and that sometimes these techniques cause people to reveal

things that they might not consciously want to reveal. And so I question whether or not, in pursuit of the almighty dollar, we really are justified in using these tools that were designed for other purposes, that were designed to be therapeutic and to be used in that sort of a context. And I have sometimes wondered, you know, what if we had some really powerful drug that would just cause a person to “spill their guts,” you know, just to dump their total unconscious content so that we could then use that information to sell more powerfully than we already sell, to advertise more powerfully than we already advertise. You know, it goes back to Vance Packard and *The Hidden Persuaders*.

Livingston: Right.

Dr. Dave: Did you read that book?

Livingston: No. It was before my time.

Dr. Dave: Oh, you never did? Well, years ago, I don't know. I think that book came out in the fifties or early sixties where it was an expose of subliminal advertising techniques and so on and it was an alarming book. It kind of sounded the alarm about the lengths to which advertisers were willing to go to try to manipulate people. Now, the book was maybe a bit sensationalistic. I don't know how accurate it was. It talked about early experiments of inserting into movies subliminal suggestions to buy popcorn—

Livingston: Oh, right. Sure.

Dr. Dave: Supposedly the sale of popcorn went way up and people didn't even know that they were being manipulated to buy popcorn. I'm not sure if subsequent research has borne that out, you know, the power of subliminal suggestion. I think that—I'm trying to remember—

Livingston: It's a similar kind of thing like with hypnosis about, you know, how far a person will let themselves go.

Dr. Dave: Right.

Livingston: I mean, you know, I'm remembering—See I'm trying to remember the name of the movie with Maureen O'Hara and John Candy. Do you remember a movie—it had to be about fifteen, eighteen years ago, something like that where

Maureen O'Hara was this dominating mother and John Candy was the son and he's dating a mortician, an embalmer, a woman who's doing embalming. Do you remember this at all?

Dr. Dave: I don't know. Was Jamie Lee Curtis the embalmer?

Livingston: No. No.

Dr. Dave: I don't know.

Livingston: It was a dark-haired girl, a pretty dark-haired girl. At any rate, he starts dating this girl and his mother doesn't want to let him go and it was about the most unbelievably controlling mother you could imagine. We went to see this movie with a couple-friend where the guy had a mother who was just like that and my husband and I are sitting there wincing and I thought, "Oh my god, I wonder if this is going to bring up all kinds of stuff for this guy." It didn't bring up a thing. He thought the movie was a riot. He wasn't ready to look at that.

Dr. Dave: Yeah, so he didn't even perceive that similarity like you and your husband.

Livingston: No, not at all, and believe me, no, the other woman had the exact same feelings that we did. We all recognized the situation very clearly and we were going, "Oh my god." Nope. Not a clue. Not a clue. So he wasn't ready to go there and so I think that people go where they are able to go. That's my personal belief. Not that you can't be abused because I think there is abuse. You know, for example, like when I was talking to you a week or so ago, I think they're doing tarot in a focus group, for example, where the people didn't know that was going to happen. I know if I walked into a group where that was happening, that would be frightening to me.

Dr. Dave: Right, right, because there are many negative associations out there to the idea of the tarot cards.

Livingston: Well if it's going to predict my death, I don't want to see it.

Dr. Dave: Yeah or the Ouija board or something.

Livingston: Yeah.

Dr. Dave: You know there is a death card in the tarot.

Livingston: Right.

Dr. Dave: And I think that's one of the things that makes people—it really puts people off.

Livingston: Right.

Dr. Dave: Like, “Oh, this is spooky.”

Livingston: But if it's the death of a bad habit, that's a very positive thing.

Dr. Dave: Exactly, exactly. The death card has both the negative and the positive just like every other card does and, generally, it's taken to be about death and rebirth, you know, that there is something that needs to die so that something else can be reborn. You know, that's one of those, sort of, cosmic lessons or patterns.

Livingston: So can you see any value—as we're going to try to wrap this up—can you see any values of bringing archetype into marketing in a positive way, one that would, you know, be in keeping with your ethics?

Dr. Dave: Well, there was a report that I did years ago. I was doing some work for Atari and they asked me to do some secondary research on the whole phenomenon that they were very interested in the fact that there were all these young boys who were playing *Dungeons and Dragons*. And they were in the process of trying to develop games that sort of went along that pattern. And in the report that I wrote, I actually drew upon a lot of this Jungian thinking, describing the hero's journey, the quest for adventure and rites of initiation and how important across the ages it has been for young boys. They reach a place where they test themselves. They need to test themselves as warriors. In the past, societies have developed ways of recognizing and channeling that energy. For example, the bar mitzvah, you know, in Judaism recognizes at age thirteen that there is this rite of passage. Australian aborigines have rites of passage. All of these tribal cultures had rites of passage to recognize and help young people move through the developmental stages and to help them to feel good, to aspire to that growth and movement and to feel good about the process of becoming an adult. Our society mostly has lacked those kinds of challenges and adventures and so kids often seek those out in illicit ways,

whether it's through early sex or smoking or drugs or drinking or dangerous driving—

Livingston: Stealing.

Dr. Dave: —or, you know, other things that put them at risk. But I think part of one of the things that is in the genetic code is that young males in particular need to be challenged and need to take risks and need to have adventures.

Livingston: That's kind of like basic training in the army.

Dr. Dave: Yeah, yeah. You know, I think that's why a lot of guys sign up and go to the army.

Livingston: Yeah. I could see it. I could see it.

Dr. Dave: So that was one time when I did bring that thinking into my market research to help them understand the psychology of young males and the kinds of video games that might appeal to them and why these *Dungeons and Dragons* type games had such a powerful grasp on their imagination. But, in general, as I've already indicated, I'm reluctant to bring these tools to bear on consumer psychology. Most of the market research that I've been involved in has been business to business. A lot of it has been around the computer industry. And I really haven't been involved in anything that I felt was manipulative or getting people to, you know, buy things that they wouldn't be likely to buy anyway. I'm interviewing people who are the head of the computer department at some corporation and we're trying to, you know, see what features they want on a software product. That to me doesn't have any ethical taint—

Livingston: That's really interesting.

Dr. Dave: —or archetypal significance that I can see.

Livingston: Well I think that that's a really interesting slant on all this and, you know, as you know from when we talked before, I have a somewhat different feeling about it because I think that branding has a lot to do with relationship and understanding the relationship and I can only work on brands that I feel good about so because I think there is some manipulation and that we do that to each other all the time.

Dr. Dave: That's true. I can see there's been a shift in advertising where people got into Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Livingston: Yep.

Dr. Dave: You know, realizing, Oh, the higher needs of self-actualization and so on. And so now we see these ads that have, you know, almost a kind of spiritual quality to them or the sort of lifestyle, you know, like the—I'm thinking of these Coke ads that show happy, smiling people dancing in the air. I'm not doing a good job of describing what I'm trying to.

[laughter]

Livingston: I think you did great.

Dr. Dave: If you could see me dancing around the room, you'd be getting it.

Livingston: Actually, I was getting a picture of that as you were speaking.

Dr. Dave: Good.

Livingston: It looked good. It looked good. Well, I want to say thank you very, very much for this information and I feel like we could go on talking for a long time—

Dr. Dave: It was fun.

Livingston: —maybe sometime we can do that again actually. And so, thank you, David, and I wish you very good luck in both your market research and in your application of psychotherapy and psychology and Jungian psychology in particular and I hope we talk again.

Dr. Dave: Okay. Thank you, Sharon.

Livingston: Thanks so much.

Dr. Dave: Okay. That's our interview for today. I hope you were able to transcend my lousy phone recording job. This past weekend I went to the portable media expo in Ontario, California. It should have been called the podcasting expo because it focused almost entirely on podcasting. It was fun to meet all of my own

favorite podcaster personalities there. There were presentations by media luminaries from companies like Yahoo, Odeo, MTV and Audible.com among others. Most thrilling of all was the spirit of revolution among podcasters and our desire to provide an alternative to the wasteland that terrestrial radio has become. In keeping with today's show, the idea of revolution can certainly be seen as an archetype. The motif of death and rebirth runs throughout mythology. Something has to die so that something new can be born. The phoenix rising from the ashes is a well-known image that encapsulates this idea. It is in this spirit that I append the podsafe musical piece, *Heard it on a Podcast*, at the end of our show. It's a rock and roll anthem that really captures the energy of the podcasting revolution. If you haven't heard it, you should definitely stick around for it right after our closing theme music.

As usual, we love to hear from you. Send your emails or mp3 audio comments to Shrink@ShrinkRapRadio.com. Our show notes are at www.ShrinkRapRadio.com. On Skype and Gizmo Project, free programs that you can download, our name is ShrinkPod and you can leave voicemail for us on either of these. If you are enjoying our podcast, please rate us or post a review on the Yahoo directory at podcast.yahoo.com or you could do that on the Odeo directory at www.odeo.com or again on podcastpickle.com. That's it for now. This is Dr. Dave reminding you, once again, It's all in your mind.