

The Inner Detective



Using reading we do for fun and relaxation
as grist for the mill of our self-knowledge
and spiritual growth.

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Both John the Baptist and Jesus said, *“Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.”* (Matthew 3:2, 4:17) Repent comes from the Greek word **metanoia** which means not so much being sorry for what we have done as *turning about* or a complete reversal of one’s self and one’s life. To do this we have to make a searching, fearless journey into the inner world. There we must have a look at the present furnishings and recognize what we must be rid of so that we can enter the Kingdom of God. About this Jesus taught, *“You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free.”* (John 8:32) This drew an instant protest from his listeners declaring they were free born and not slaves. Humanly, in the external world, this was true. They were free from chains and whips and servitude in the outer world.



But Jesus was speaking of the inner world where they were not free from the chains of fear, whips of anxiety and servitude to tension, worry and depression that were keeping them in mental bondage. They remained in bondage because they had not learned how to know the truth about themselves. Like many of us today, they were afraid to look at themselves honestly. There is no deception quite so great as self-deception...nor quite so dangerous.

There is an unknown world within us that is, to most of us, as dark and unexplored as Dr. Livingston’s Africa. Here we can find the Presence of God and all the divine ideas we need access to in order to fulfill God’s intention for our lives. Also in our inner world are the aspects of ourselves that we are unaware of or have stuffed back at some time in the past. While we can bury what is displeasing it will fester in mentally and physically negative symptoms. Until we uproot it and shine the light of consciousness on it, the

outer effect and its inner cause remains. One way we can get to know our inner world is to increase our awareness of the archetypes in the stories that interest and entertain us.

Archetype is a Greek word meaning **original mold or pattern**. Archetypes have been with us since the dawn of the ages and are reflected in recurring images in the dreams, art, and literature of all people in all cultures. Archetypes are the basic building blocks of the psyche that are patterns of energy that shape our lives and profoundly influence consciousness. They are inner images charged with power and purpose. Each archetype has a lesson to teach us and a blessing to bestow upon us. Each of them, when they get our attention, presides over a stage of our spiritual growth and development.

The archetypal stories that most effect me are detective stories. The detective is the one who hunts out the hidden aspects of life's mysteries and brings them to light. All fictional detectives picture for us the archetype of the detective, lying deep within our soul. We can employ our inner detective in the investigation of our own interior hidden places with the intention of revealing some of the secrets and solving some of the mysteries of our own lives.

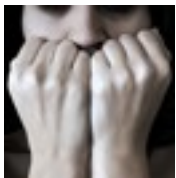
Other explorers of the inner world have seen the parallel between external and internal detecting. Pioneers in modern psychology, Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung were both avid readers of detective stories. The skills of the detective in following clues and solving the mystery were, for Freud and Jung, an analogy for the psychologist's following clues (in dreams, projections, and negative symptoms) and solving the mystery of what was the cause of a client's problem. That is the work our inner detective can do for us — help us to follow the clues in our dreams, recurring problems and the negative symptoms in our bodies and relationships, to solve the mystery of what unconscious aspect is causing our *dis-ease*.

The detectives we feel a strong attraction to — Sherlock Holmes, Miss Marple, Hercule Poirot, Nancy Drew and others — model for us the many skills of the good investigator. Let's look at the skills they model so that we can translate them into parallel skills for detecting in our inner world. For all of these detectives, one important skill was keeping their eyes open for clues.

Our first clue in inner detecting is found in whether the detective who is appealing to us is male or female. Within each of us are both masculine and feminine aspects. The masculine includes the thinking /intellectual function of consciousness. The feminine includes the feeling/emotional function of consciousness. When we are drawn to male detectives like Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot, they are calling forth our thinking/intellect, and as they used their *little grey cells* to find the truth, so must we.

As we enjoy the stories of Holmes and Poirot using their thinking/intellectual faculties we can consciously participate in expanding our thinking/intellectual faculties. Thinking organizes reality according to innate relations between things. By devising ways to further organize the affairs and details of our lives we develop our thinking. To feed the intellect, read serious material such as philosophy, metaphysics and science. This can be a pleasure from time to time, since we're using our thinking/intellect for other than just the everyday, necessary tasks.

When the inner detective reveals to us that we are caught up in head spinning, anxiety, incessant mulling over problems and believing in



unrealistic philosophies and opinions its a clue our thinking/intellect needs to be fed and expanded. Remember, if we do not think for ourselves, someone else will do it for us.

As we enjoy the stories where they detective is female — from Nancy Drew, a teenager, to Miss Marple, a senior citizen, we are being drawn by the feminine or feeling/emotional aspect of ourselves. The way to

develop and expand our feeling/emotional aspect is to be aware of what we are feeling without becoming caught up in them as the following story illustrates.

A belligerent samurai, an old Japanese story goes, once challenged a Zen master to explain the concept of heaven and hell. But the monk replied with scorn, *“You’re nothing but a lout — I can’t waste my time with the likes of you!”*

His very honor attacked, the samurai flew into a rage and, pulling his sword from its scabbard, yelled, *“I could kill you for your impertinence!”*

“That, the monk quietly replied, “is hell.”

Startled at seeing the truth in what the master pointed out about the anger that had him in its grip, the samurai calmed down, sheathed his sword, and bowed, thanking the monk for the insight.

“And that,” said the monk, “is heaven.”

The awareness the samurai had of his own angry state illustrates the crucial difference between being caught up in a feeling and becoming aware of what we are feeling. With awareness came freedom, insight and the power to move from anger to peace — from hell to heaven.

When we engage the inner detective to help us see when we’re *caught up in negative emotions and feelings*, it is a clue we need to develop and expand our awareness of our feelings. We can do that by increasing our vocabulary of words that describe what we are feeling. With clearer description comes greater awareness of what we’re feeling and from awareness comes insight, freedom and the power to move ourselves on the inside.

Calling forth the inner detective can help us know the truth about ourselves at the level Jesus was speaking about; with awareness we will be set

free from the chains of fear, whips of anxiety and servitude to tension, worry, and depression that keep us in bondage on the inside of ourselves.

free at last. free at last.

Thank God Almighty I am free at last!

