

# Carl Jung

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Abstract:

Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) was a Swiss psychiatrist and founder of analytical psychology, which is also known as individual psychology because of its emphasis on the individual psyche and personal wholeness. His influence continues to grow in many areas, such as psychological types, dream work, play therapy, and the role of spirituality and religion. This brief essay focuses on his contributions to positive psychology, with respect to meaning and integration. He has been recognized by Martin Seligman as one of the forerunners of positive psychology.

## **The importance of meaning**

The positive psychology of Viktor Frankl and Jung can be classified as depth positive psychology, because both of them emphasize the need to integrate the unconscious realm. Both can be considered fathers of contemporary positive psychology because of their focus on the innate human potential for growth through meaning and spirituality.

Ann Graber (2004) recognized Carl Jung as someone who saw the best possibilities of the human spirit, as Viktor Frankl. Jung (1933) also conceptualized psycho-neurosis as the suffering of a human being who has not discovered what life meant for him. In other words, both Frankl and Jung emphasized the connection between meaning systems and mental health.

## **The duality of human nature**

Probably influenced by Eastern philosophies and religions, Jung adopted a dualistic framework of positive psychology. Jung (1933) recognized that duality is the fact of human nature. There is a dark side to every bright side and there is a bright side to every dark side. One example of this duality is that we cannot achieve wholeness without integrating the dark side of the self.

The archetype of the Self represents the center of the psyche and is commonly expressed by the symbol of a Mandala. The Self signifies wholeness, the product of integrating the consciousness and unconscious aspects of the psyche through individuation. One cannot actualize selfhood without getting in touch with the Shadow, the archetype of the dark and rejected parts of the self. The Shadow contains the libido, forbidden feelings such as lust and rage. The Shadow wants to be acknowledged and brought into consciousness. If we

embrace and “romance” the Shadow, we will channel it to productive use and gain access to vitality and creativity.

It takes courage to undertake the “Shadow work” because it can be painful to come to terms with one’s negative emotions painful aspects of life, such as personal traumas and family secrets. However, if we ignore the Shadow, it will become darker and denser, and sooner or later it will surface in some destructive way.

### **Individuation – the process towards wholeness**

The process of individuation is to reconcile and integrate the various differentiated components into a coherent and balanced whole. Thus, it integrates the Ego (center of consciousnesses) with the Shadow, Anima (the feminine personality characteristics) with the animus (the masculine characteristics), the rational (thinking and feeling) and irrational (sensing and intuition) psychic functions.

This is an innate and natural process of being human growth. However, because of our secular, materialistic and narcissistic culture, we become disconnected with humanity and spirituality. Our focus on scientific and rational thinking further makes us ignore the creative and spiritual aspects of the Self. As a result, we become unbalanced and stunned in our psychological growth. Since neurosis and depression result from a disharmony between consciousness and unconsciousness, healing and wholeness must come from restoring harmony within oneself and with the external world.

In order to facilitate this process of individuation, one must be open to parts of oneself that have been ignored or denied. One needs to pay attention to messages from the unconscious and the spiritual realms through dream analysis, word associations, and interpretation of symbols, metaphors and creative activities. Understanding the symbolic meaning of the unconscious archetypes is a major step towards attainment of meaningful living.

Individuation is essential for fulfilling one’s full potentials and flourishing, but it is a painful process. One of the common themes in Jungian analysis is that just as there is no rebirth without death, there can be no wholeness without realizing our brokenness, and no self-actualization without suffering.

The greatest contribution of Carl Jung is his concept of integration towards wholeness; it is an integration of opposite components within the person, such as the Shadow and the Ego. The second wave of positive psychology, as proposed by Paul Wong (2011), is informed by Tao’s yin-yang principle and Jung’s individuation process of integrating the dark side and the bright side of personality; it also recognizes the upside of negative emotions as well as the downside of positive emotions. In other words, Carl Jung foreshadows the development of a more integrative and balanced model of positive psychology.

### **References**

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**Further Readings**

Jung, C. G. (1939). *The integration of the personality*. Oxford, England: Farrar & Rinehart.