



# The Alchemy of Symbols

Module 3: working with symbols to influence and effect goals

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# *Applied Jung    The Alchemy of Symbols*

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## Module 3: working with symbols to influence and effect goals

The third function of symbolisation we are going to work with, is the active engagement with your unconscious in order to receive from it symbols for the realisation of specific goals, the resolution of problems or the overcoming of obstacles. This approach differs from the previous two modules in that it is an active process that allows a symbol to arise from the unconscious in relation to a conscious intention. In modules 1 and 2 we accessed existing symbols that live through us and learned how to explore these symbols, their meaning and their expression of our authenticity. I am sure (or at least hope) at this point you are amazed at the power and depth of symbol work; and have found that you are both all things in the universe and the single most interesting one!

We are now moving into a different type of relatedness to symbols. In this module we will explore interacting with the unconscious directly to allow for a shift in your experience of external reality. In the next module we will interact with the unconscious to effect a shift internally. The difference between the two techniques is subtle but important. In this module you will focus your intention and symbolise the intention in order to manifest an outcome. Whereas in module 4, we will symbolise a past experience in order to shift our relationship to an event in the internal world.

Working with symbols to effect a change in your reality is treacherous waters. I will try to guide you through this process safely. Symbols can take time to work so we hope that you have some successes by the end of the course and are willing to share these with the group.

The application for this week will involve finding a resolution to a difficult situation and setting a goal that you wish to achieve.



## Goals, intentions and manifestation

First of all, let me apologize for using the term manifestation. I use this term although it is jaded and stale for lack of a better expression. People project different meanings onto the word manifestation, so I will try to explain here what it is that I mean when I use it.

To manifest something is to actualise a desire from the unconscious into the world. It is verbalising/capturing what you unconsciously desire, thereby making it conscious, and then putting a method into place in order for it to realise itself in your reality. This sounds great, but we teach it with *a big warning sign* attached to it. I will elaborate why this is so.

When using symbol work for manifesting goals, there are some basic concepts that you need to understand. The most important of these is that the symbol is given to you from the unconscious; you cannot consciously create a symbol for your goal. Authentic symbolisation will allow you to explore the phenomenon of changing your experience of reality. Transformation is the process that changes your relationship and perspective on yourself and your world. When you change the way you relate to yourself, your relatedness to the world is automatically adjusted. Objective reality is perceived through our own lenses and our experience of the world is deeply affected by our complexes, wounds and paradigms. Symbols offer a way of working around these lenses and blocks to bring about transformation of internal and consequently external reality. The goal of the symbol is to align your desire with your optimum and authentic destiny. This is perhaps not always what you wanted, but it will be what you need. Hence our warning that you need to use symbols carefully and selectively.

This is not to be confused with signs. In other words, symbol work cannot be compared to creating dream boards, collages or similar concepts of manifesting your future. There is a big difference between symbol work and the positive thinking, law-of-attraction, or visualisation approach to goal achievement (simply referred to as 'positive thinking' hereinafter). For example, making collages of your dream house or driving the Porsche you want, versus working with your own symbols. These positive thinking approaches are ego driven and goal orientated,



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focusing solely on conscious desires. With positive thinking the goal is consciously chosen and manifested by means of external experiences. It is a very different approach to working with symbols. Symbol work is aligning your soul's desires with your conscious desires and the focus is authenticity and individuation.

There are two levels of engaging with this technique. The first one is to resolve a conflict/stressful situation or predetermine an outcome of sorts. The second level is a much more intense level of engaging with this technique in order to manifest an authentic desire or goal.

This technique was taught to Stephen and myself as students of a maverick Jungian teacher whom we met 17 years ago. He was the first teacher that taught me the valuable lesson that the teacher must not be confused with the teaching. ☺ As all the students did, we jumped into this practice head first and despite his warnings we forged ahead. I believe that everything we have achieved was through working with this technique. But it was a rocky road! Doing this work challenges your complexes and unconscious beliefs and they go into revolt!

Another very important aspect of this symbol work is that the symbol that you create will not give you the outcome that you desire in the way you desire it. The outcome will always be a surprise to you. You are unable to comprehend all solutions, and the symbol takes into consideration many aspects of your psyche, so the resolution often comes in a form that you would not expect. Also keep in mind that the symbols you create to shift major complexes will effect a change in you in order to change your experience of reality.



## Manifesting symbols for resolutions

Sometimes in life we are confronted with situations and conflicts that seem hopeless. In these instances, I suggest working with symbols. Symbols have an uncanny way of resolving these seemingly complicated issues.

Whether you are trying to close a deal, or get yourself out of a sticky situation or find resolution to an argument, the symbol will offer a solution and often spark an unexpected outcome. The symbol affects the situation but it also affects you. As you work with the symbol, the symbol works with you. The symbols are able to change subtle personal dynamics, which has a profound impact on the way you relate to others and your interaction with them.

To quote Jung here:

The conflict is not to be overcome by the conscious mind remaining caught between the opposites, and for this very reason it needs a symbol to point out the necessity of detaching itself from its origins.

Jung, C.G., Collected Works 9.1 Paragraph 287

Working with symbols allows unconscious aspects in yourself to be accommodated within your conscious goals, or to put this another way, it facilitates an accord of mutual accommodation between the two: conscious and unconscious. The symbol represents and thereby holds the unknown aspects of a problem that you may be dealing with. So for example, a typical situation that you may want to use a symbol for, would be to resolve conflict with a colleague at work. The first step with this type of symbol creation is to know what you want consciously and, depending on the situation and what the ideal outcome is that you want. Once you have decided what it is you want, keep this objective in your mind and then wait for the unconscious to give you a symbol. This is usually an image, but it could be a song or an object too. It is very



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important to remember that *you cannot assign a symbol; but you need to receive it from the unconscious.*

This usually happens within seconds of the conscious intent being stated, you will see it in your mind's eye (or hear it as a song), even if it is just a flash, grab hold of it. If you receive a symbol that you don't like, don't try to change it. This is the correct symbol and you need to work with it. The symbol itself contains information about your problem and while reflecting on it, often this will reveal something to you that may change your perspective on the situation.

The symbol contains a resolution that is appropriate and includes the unconscious, unknown factors that have an effect on your situation. In this example, you may not know what is going on with the other person who is giving you a hard time. They are projecting something onto you or dealing with a personal situation that is causing them to behave the way they do. The symbol takes this into consideration. You can also consider interacting with the symbol through an active imagination. You do not need to reflect on or keep the symbol alive by thinking about it constantly. Once it is created, it will set in motion factors that will resolve your issue.

## Active imagination

When working with symbols for resolution to a difficult situation, you can use the technique of an active imagination to guide you to resolve the situation. Often when the symbol appears, it is a good idea to interact with it on an imaginative level. Focussing on the symbol may bring some change or addition to the symbol. One can then interact with the symbol in order to affect the outcome. So as an example, let's say your symbol appears and it is an animal. When you focus your attention on the animal, you may notice it is in a cage, or hurt, or snarling at you. You get the idea. You can then interact with your symbol in the imaginative realm in order to resolve whatever dichotomy it is symbolising. In another example, your symbol could be a green apple. You decide to eat it, but when you bite into the apple it is rotten. You can then



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play with the symbol, e.g. cut out the rotten bits or make an apple pie. It is important that you work with the symbol that appears, don't change it into another symbol or exchange it for anything else. If the symbol is an item of clothing, don this item imaginatively prior to the meeting or phone call that the symbol is meant to resolve. These symbols respond extremely well to being interacted with and the results are typically both conclusive and interesting.

## Manifesting goals

When you work with symbols to manifest, it shakes up the dynamics in your psyche. We all know the warning 'be careful what you want because you might just get it'. The first step in symbol manifestation is knowing what you want; this in itself is a challenging question. In my experience, very few people know what they want. Often they think they want money, power, materialistic things and so forth, but these are only symbols of what they want. They could also want a business or a person or a specific house, and these are also symbols. So the work you need to do prior to creating a goal with a symbol, is to make sure you understand what it is you want.

If your goal is to have money, then the first thing you need to explore is what you believe money will bring you that you don't already have. If you are behind with the mortgage or rent, the truth is probably that you want security. If you want money because you are tired of working yourself to death, then perhaps what you actually want is freedom. If you want money because you are sick and tired of always chasing the bills, maybe what you actually want is choice. Finding out what you really want is of the utmost importance, because then you can set out to manifest security, freedom or choice. Your unconscious will be more likely to align itself to a real, meaningful goal, than a superficial materialistic one.

Once you know what it is you want, then you need to reflect on it. It is easy to crave freedom but what form could that come in? People can lose everything and then only be free. So make





sure that you know how you would like your desire to manifest itself. Perhaps there is a better description or word for what you desire. Be very clear on what it is that you want and how you want to experience your life.

## The Warning

Expect the unexpected. First make sure you understand clearly what it is you want and try to consider the potential pitfalls and unexpected consequences of your goal. When you feel that you have done your considered reflections, then write it down in detail, exactly what you want and how it should affect your life. Once captured in detail, the symbol will emerge and you can allocate it to your goal.

Secondly: (NB) The symbol has an intention of its own, or if not, creates a gateway for the unconscious to express its intention. What this means is that the symbol brings the conscious and unconscious into alignment. But by definition then, what the symbol manifests cannot be an expression of the conscious mind alone. In other words, the symbol brings about a resolution, but rarely if ever in the form which you consciously imagined. What is manifest is a superior form of your conscious desire. In most cases however, this may not be immediately understandable from a conscious perspective.

Once the symbol has been identified and associated to a particular objective through consciousness, it is in motion and unstoppable.

Hence my warning: Do not create this type of symbols unless it is really important! They are powerful and will affect your reality!

To quote Jung here:

With the birth of the symbol, the regression of libido into the unconscious ceases.

Regression is converted into progression, the blockage starts to flow again, and the lure of the maternal abyss is broken. (Psychological Types, Collected Works 6, para. 445).



## Conclusion

This week's symbol work is as much about getting to know who you are and what you want as it is about creating symbols. Don't create symbols willy nilly. Often when you reflect on the outcome that you desire, you will know how to proceed and what to do without having to create a symbol. This symbol work can alter reality, internally and externally, so before you embark on this process be sure that you understand what it is that you desire. Symbol work is aligning your soul's desires with your conscious desires and the focus is authenticity and individuation. To become authentic and individuated, you sometimes need to change and transform. Symbols will be a catalyst to this process and can cause great upheaval.

This is the end of the lecture; I hope you have an interesting week working with manifestation.

Please share your experiences on the Forum.

Next week we will look at symbols for healing and the transcendent function.

Chat again soon.

Anja



## Module 3: applications

Follow the guidelines below in order to work with the two applications. I did explain the dangers of this form of symbol work explored in Application B in detail in the lecture, but if you haven't listened to the podcast or read the transcript, please note that the work in Application B can cause major upheaval in your life. If you decide not to do Application B for this reason, then please only attempt Application A. Application A could also cause upheaval. The major difference being in the context of Application A, is that you are already in a state of distress.

### Application A: symbol work to resolve a situation of conflict or an obstacle that you are facing

For the purpose of this application, select a problem that you are currently dealing with:

- a conflict situation that needs to be resolved
- a meeting or communication that you would like a positive outcome to
- any type of problem that you are dealing with

Once you have identified the issue/problem/situation, write it in your journal in. State clearly what it is and what your preferred outcome would be.

Allow the symbol to come to you if it hasn't already appeared while you were capturing it in your journal. Anything that appears in your mind's eye is the symbol – an object, song, image, etc. Do NOT discard it if you think it is silly or if don't like it. Accepts the symbol which appears.

Capture the symbol in your journal with as much detail as possible.

Now focus on this symbol. Remember the work is done in your imagination, using the lens of your inner eye.

- What is happening to the symbol? If it is an animal, where is it? What is it doing? If it is a piece of clothing, where is it? If it is food, can you eat it?
- Does it change in any way or is the situation/environment of the symbol stagnant?
- Can you interact with the symbol?
- What happens when you do?



- Does the symbol suggest or show any potential problem, i.e. the animal is trapped, can you change this situation?

If the symbol appears and it seems acceptable and you feel comfortable with it, let it be. But if your symbol is not good, play with it in the imagination until you find a working solution. Please note that you should not replace/swop/displace your symbol, work with what you get from the unconscious.

## Application B: symbols for manifesting a goal

Reflect on one of the major absences that you face in your life. Capture it in your journal. What do you think this absence symbolises? So for example, if it is money that you lack, reflect on what money means you? It could be anything including freedom, power, self-worth, choice, and so forth. Reflect on it deeply. The point of this exercise is to get to the root of the problem so that when your symbol arrives, it is aligned with your unconscious desire.

Once you have identified your authentic goal, then capture it in detail in your journal. Consider the consequences and affect it could have on your life, once it has manifested.

Write in your journal a statement of intention. The statement must include your goal in detail. Remember that your goal may become clear in a form that you might not have expected or anticipated, so don't be too prescriptive on how you want it to manifest.

Now allow the unconscious to give you a symbol. Once it appears, focus on it, and take in as much detail as possible.

Capture your symbol in your journal. Describe it in as much detail as possible. If it changes or morphs whilst you are focusing on it, allow it to develop organically.

It's truly as simple as this! Once this process is completed, you have hit the start! Strap on your seat belt, the ride can be bumpy.

Should you experience that nothing is happening or your goal is not manifested, you are dealing with neurotic content. It means the current dynamic you are attempting to recalibrate is obstinate and fixed in its current state. In this kind of situation there will still be movement but not exactly what you have wished for. Whatever result is produced by the symbolisation needs



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to be assimilated and then the whole process must to be repeated; taking the new *status quo* into account as the starting point.

All the best with your manifestations. I hope to hear about it on the Forum.