

THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPLEXES

HEALTHY, NEUROTIC OR PSYCHOTIC.

Everyone is made up of complexes. There are various parts to all of us, but we identify with our ego, our central complex. Complexes can be healthy, neurotic or psychotic. A healthy complex is usually either conscious or partly conscious, so part of our ego identity, e.g. a talent. A neurotic complex causes us to be stuck or repeat unhealthy patterns. Neurotic complexes are usually unconscious but can be partly conscious as well, e.g. you are aware that you have an aversion to something. A psychotic complex renders the ego incapable of keeping the psyche together, and this results in someone who has a fractured psyche. These individuals are unable to function and need to be committed to a psychiatric institution.

THE PROCESS

Complexes can develop at any time in our lives, but mostly during childhood. During ego development many things can inhibit the healthy development of ego, often resulting in a complex. When you have an experience where you are unable to re-integrate it into the conscious ego complex, there is a disintegration which causes a complex, e.g. trauma. But it is not only trauma that can cause complexes, any situation where you find the experience not to fit in with your fantasy idea of what things should be like; or where you are confronted with a reality which is unacceptable, a complex is created.

QUALITIES OF COMPLEXES

Complexes are one-sided. When a complex constellates it is as if one is possessed. The ego functions are affected. As per the video in week 7, the individual's being, doing, thinking, identity and creativity become suppressed and the complex takes over relatedness. Emotion and memories flood the psyche and the individual's behavior is pre-determined based on the history and repeating patterns of the complex. As the complex is informed by archetypes, there is bivalent nature to them. Part of the complex is attached to the ego, and the other part is rejected and projected onto someone else. This causes a conflict between the conscious and unconscious position, fixing the individual between the two poles and severing them from accessing another way of relating.

EXAMPLES

To explain this phenomenon, let us look at some examples.

Susan has an aggressive complex. When this complex is triggered, she becomes very aggressive. Her ego consciousness is unable to intervene and stop this and after the episode she feels embarrassed and ashamed. She is unconscious that the complex is triggered when she feels dismissed. She also does not realize that she is dismissive of others.

John has a negative mother complex. His mother smothered him as a child. As an adult he keeps finding himself in relationships where he feels his partner is too demanding. He replaces partners often and does not understand why women are so needy. He is addicted to pornography and unable to develop intimate relationships with women. He is unconscious that he perceives their normal need for emotional intimacy as demanding.

Letitia has a negative father complex. Her father was emotionally unavailable. She suffers with anxiety and does not trust men because from her experience in relationships, she has realized that men will always abandon her. She has a very low self-esteem. She is unconscious that she becomes exceptionally needy and insecure in relationships and that this eventually forces the lover to leave.

David has a superiority complex. His colleagues are slow and makes mistakes in their work which he loves to point out. He knows that he is better than them and he does not understand why he has not advanced in the company. He only enters relationships where he is in control and admired. He is unconscious of his feelings of inferiority.

These are some examples of how complexes can affect and influence our relationships to ourselves and others.

Video for week 19:

https://player.vimeo.com/external/332942574.hd.mp4?s=60faf0b7cd08b23ac83e12027c034711bb5af020&profile_id=175

Articles:

<https://web.wellness-institute.org/blog/a-jungian-approach-to-evaluating-the-development-of-complexes-in-childhood>

<https://www.thesap.org.uk/resources/articles-on-jungian-psychology-2/about-analysis-and-therapy/complexes-and-archetypes/>

<https://appliedjung.com/a-bullet/>

YouTube videos:

<https://youtu.be/pFifLqUHfYs>

<https://vimeo.com/284984871>

Topic for next week: Working with complexes

