



# MAGNUM OPUS: ALBEDO

Module 2: Symbols Week 3

## QUOTE

*“The transcendent function, which plays the role of autonomous regulator, emerges and gradually begins to work as the process of individuation begins to unfold.”*

*Humbert, 1988, p. 125*

Symbols Application Week 3

Compiled by The Centre for Applied Jungian Studies

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## **Introduction**

Please note that the lecture on Symbols is included in Application 1. This is your third application for this Module. Next Monday you will receive your fourth and last application.

## **Week 3 Application Guide:**

### **Function 3: Using symbols for moving through and healing experiences of loss and trauma**

Symbols can play a powerful role in the process of healing and recovery. The human condition is littered with experiences of loss and trauma. Everyone will experience losing a loved one or losing their health or losing themselves at some point on life's journey. That is inevitable. In this world nothing lasts forever. Yet, we are not prepared when it happens and we often have no idea how to process it.

People who have suffered any type of traumatic loss and find themselves stuck and unable to shift, need to move through the loss and distress to reconnect with meaning and purpose. This movement requires a symbolisation of

their experiences. Psychoanalysis teaches us that an invaluable tool in accessing meaning, arguably the only tool, is symbolisation.

How do we symbolise our experiences to access the meaning they offer?

The most basic form of symbolisation is the act of speaking about your experiences. Just telling your story to someone else is cathartic and healing. The act of speaking moves the pain and trauma from an alienating experience to a story that is both unique to you and also part of the collective condition of being human. The act of speaking about it makes your feelings and emotions about the experience conscious. Emotional pain isolates and no one can really know or understand how you feel, but in telling your story of your pain, you will express it, compare it to something, give it words and a name and a description. This process is an act of symbolisation.

A further step to using symbolism for healing is to find a symbol that can pull you through your current experience of distress. Any event experienced that has a profound impact on us has a physical, literal, and obvious element to it, but it also affects us on a more subtle unconscious level. This unconscious trauma takes its toll on us in many ways, and it is often impossible to consciously realise the effects of this trauma. When you are in distress, your psyche will naturally be attracted to a symbol that can heal you and move you through your distress. Jung said that the most serious psychological crises cannot be overcome but only outgrown. This is the goal of the symbol. Many people find this solace in nature or being with animals. Some have a dream or a numinous experience. It can be anything: anything that transports you to

another place, another time, and a different way of being that contains this magical elixir of healing. The symbol helps you to move beyond your current experience into the future.

### **Application Week 3:**

This week is going to be challenging. I am going to ask you to remember wounds that have not healed.

For the application, I want you to capture in your journal an experience that happened to you that still revisits you occasionally and fills you with dread, fear, loathing, shame, sorrow, rage, guilt or some combination of these.

When you capture this event, take particular care to express how it made you feel and what emotions it still evokes in you. Where it lies in your body and how you feel about yourself in relation to this experience.

Once you have finished, re-read it and then access a symbol for this story.

First state your intent which should be something along the lines of how you forgive yourself, that it was not your fault, that it taught you something, that you would not be who you are today without that experience, that you now understand the pain and trauma are a human condition and bonds you with all of mankind. (these are examples and you obviously need to find your own intention of healing)

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Once you have written your intent, you are going to access a symbol of healing, of letting go. To do this:

- first find in yourself a space of peace and equanimity.
- Now, ask the universe/God/your higher self to give you a symbol of healing.
- The symbol will appear to you in your mind's eye. Take the first thing that you receive, do not doubt it and don't try to change it. Write it down. It can be an object, animal, song, poem, story, anything!

During the week, reflect on your symbol. Capture in your journal any synchronicities. If you start ruminating on the experience, immediately recall your symbol. The symbol should take the place of the memories. As the symbol contains both conscious and unconscious content, it is a far more powerful remedy to healing the psyche, because it takes into consideration those unconscious aspects of the trauma that you are not aware of.

Reflect on how you feel towards the event and the effects the symbol has on you.