

10 Signs Of Your Shadow Self & How To Be Empowered By The Underworld

BY BELINDA CABBAN

The shadow aspect is all of the things about ourselves we have been taught or told to suppress, deny, and shove down deep inside. Our shadow is what society says we shouldn't be.

Society likes to whitewash everything to make things simple, but really, it only tends to make things worse. Society puts so much emphasis on being shiny and positive all the time. But we must have a dark and light side if we are to be whole.

We witches and mermaids know and need to learn our darkest uncomfortable depths on our paths. Witches know that, like the moon, we shift from full to dark phase, moving through our moods and emotional waters. We worship the dark, starless nights as much as the brilliant, crystalline full moon.

Those of you who are mermaid souls understand that we cannot always swim on the surface in the gentle, warm waves. Sometimes, we must take a long breath and dive fathoms below amongst the shipwrecks of our past, and find our innermost prized treasures at the core of ourselves and who we truly are.

Every single person on Earth has a shadow side. A darker side that's difficult to handle – uncomfortable, inconvenient.

At some point on our path, we have all run into our dark

sister. Some call it the underworld journey. Carl Jung called it the shadow self. Our shadow selves help to teach us how to transform our pain. Our shadow self can present itself as:

- Ugly
- Extreme
- Depressing
- Doubtful
- Afraid
- Angry
- Jealous
- Self-absorbed
- Restless
- Ungrateful

I met my shadow self many years ago when I first started my witchy journey. I had hit rock bottom, losing my job, having my heart broken, and being underneath huge piles of financial strife. As a healer and psychic, most people think we are positive 24/7. I've walked my own underworld journey and I've seen my darkest, ugliest side and danced with her wildly, roughly, and afraid, until I embraced the pain and loved her.

Our spiritual journeys are never simple and smooth. We are usually forced to take a long, hard look within the mirror of self, at all the parts we don't like or are afraid of.

My shadow self is a demanding and relentless dance partner. She requires my undying attention and refuses to let me go until I acknowledge her. I have run the gauntlet and emerged stronger and better than before, like a phoenix burnt down to ashes time and time again.

I use my healing practice and women's circles to help others see that pain is transitory and, rather than resisting it and getting stuck, we should observe it, dance with it, and release it. Each time we shadow dance, we get better at learning the steps.

It's a step to the right, and I doubt that anything I create or do is worthy. Step to the left, and feel lonely in my own house or amongst my circle of friends. Twirl dizzyingly. Step lunge and she dips me low to the floor, and I start to think the most awful things imaginable...about myself, my job, my healing work, my ability to help others, my heart, my weight, or my higher purpose in the world.

The dance finishes when I'm stripped bare, sweating with shame, fear, and doubt; and feeling hopeless, gasping on the floor. This is what the shadow side looks like. It's no wonder we don't want to face her or go anywhere near her.

Yet, if we don't face these things about ourselves, they end up manifesting in our physical lives as ill health or blockages that constantly hold us down. Chaining us to the past to continually re-live the same lessons over and over in different guises, until we acknowledge them and start doing the work – which means learning how to shadow dance.

How willing are you to be stripped of your ego?

Your attachments?

Your identity?

Your name?

Your loves?

Your very being?

Shadow dancing rips and shreds them all from your grasp and only promises to return them if you allow them to perch uncaged, in your outstretched hand.

Because none of these things are really yours. None of them truly define who you are. They have nothing to do with who you

are. Your shadow-side teases you, shows you what it feels like to lose everything. Only then can you truly understand how amazing and ephemeral life really is.

How will you know when your Shadow Self has you on her dance card?

- You will feel like shit
- All those old doubts and fears you thought you had handled, start playing on repeat in your head
- You will throw up walls between yourself and loved ones

Because these are the things society tells us are so freaking awful, the habit is to repress or ignore them. But as we know, ignoring things or pushing them deep down only forces them to come up again later with vengeance.

To process your shadowy side and start to journey through your own underworld, you've got to openly *feel* everything you want to run from. Warning: take it one dance step at a time and take it at your own pace. You know yourself better than anyone and you know your own limits. It won't be comfortable or easy, but that can be a good thing.

- Say aloud or write down those terrible thoughts. Then scrunch up the paper, throw it away or burn it saying You have no power over me!
- Channel it into art therapy. Paint your emotions with long black strokes, splashes of red, or violent brush strokes of blue. Take it out on the canvas. Turn your negativity into something beautiful and creative.
- Sit in meditation and allow the toxic thoughts and feelings to flow out of your system.

- Cry it out. Have a good ol' cry, letting all those tears stream down your face. Cry and cry and cry. Let it all out of your system. After a cathartic cry, have a nice, big drink of water to rehydrate and breathe deeply, satisfied that you are on your way to healing your shadow aspect.
- Have a long, relaxing bath in pink Himalayan salts (I suggest my own blend called Cleansing Tide, perfect for clearing out old, blocked stagnant emotions; and you can find it in my Etsy shop). Pink Himalayan salts cleanse and help with detoxifying your system. The salt also helps purify and cleanse your energy and your aura. Water connects us immediately to our emotions and is ideal for grounding if you are a fellow mer-soul.
- Scream or howl. Whilst driving your car, turn up the music, wind up the windows, and scream at the top of your lungs. It helps release things you have bottled up in your heart. I've done this, tears streaming down my face while driving home. Remember to pull over to the side of the road if it gets too intense; you don't want to cause a crash and it's hard to drive if you are crying heavily.
- Talk it out. Connect to a Red Tent Women's Circle where you can safely be amongst soul kin and speak your truest words in a sacred space of nurturing and authenticity. Confide in your friends. Book in to see a professional. Sometimes speaking honestly to a trained professional will not only help you feel lighter but may give you useful advice to help you move forward.
- Book yourself some me time. Whether it's a day to just de-stress, read a book, spend time in nature, book a massage or a healing session to allow you to relax and release anything that might be holding you back.

This time, when your shadow dance partner arrives, you can whirl around and take the lead in your own beautiful wild shadow dance.

For more self-study, [The Urban Howl](#) recommends [Courage: The Joy of Living Dangerously](#) .

Sip a little more:

Girl & Wolf: Journey Through The Shadows Of Transformation

Song Of The Wild Woman: Dancing Through The Shadows & The Light

"We are not only our wounds. We are not only our shadows. We are not only made of what's hidden in the dark, and, ultimately, if we choose to seek partnership with another person, we have a soul-mandated responsibility to show up in that relationship as authentically as possible. "

DANIELLE DULSKY

Howl For Me, Wolf Woman: Deep Loving In The Darkness

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