

FOREWORD BY GAIL GODWIN

Knowing the
QUESTIONS
Living the
ANSWERS

A JUNGIAN GUIDE THROUGH THE PARADOXES OF PEACE,
CONFLICT AND LOVE THAT MARK A LIFETIME

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I would like to beg you, dear Sir, as well as I can, to have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and to try to love *the questions themselves* as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language. Don't search for the answers, which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. *Live* the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing, live your way into the answer.

– Rainer Maria Rilke

Author's Note

All stories, dialogues, and dreams in this book, except those I specifically designate as being my own, reflect material people have shared with me. To protect the privacy of those people, I have carefully altered anything that might disclose the identity of particular individuals or permit the identification of actual relationships or circumstances. Any similarity between the people and situations I have used for illustration and actual people or situations is unintended and purely coincidental.

3 (excerpt)

THE PASSAGE INTO ADULTHOOD

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

In our personal lives, the *krysis* of birth begins our painful journey into form. This journey carries us through childhood, where the journey takes on the nature of a search for identity. In this quest, our young ego has to battle the Titans and giants of the unconscious for control of our personality. We do this early in life, at age four or five, and the battle is reflected in our nightmares and fears of monsters under the bed and in the closets. We face a similar struggle again in adolescence, when so many of our emotions seem like giants and Titans—and the most fearful Titan of all is our extreme sensitivity to social acceptance and censure. In its own way, this struggle will show its face on every subsequent level of development we go through.

After our earliest challenges come the more visible crises of adolescence: the clashes between social norms and individual identity, social norms and eros, spiritually and eros,

and the search for a purpose in all of these conflicts. If adolescence goes reasonably well, the next era of life—young adulthood—seems like a Pax Romana of the personality. Life is stable and orderly and we become effective in the world. We have a solid sense of identity.

But in spite of its apparent stability, this time still cannot be considered peaceful. It is filled with its own conflict, as was the Roman Empire. It requires that we strive toward some sort of success and keep a careful watch on warring, rebellious elements in the psyche. We must specialize—selecting certain attitudes and traits and a specific area of life on which to focus our energy. Certain attributes and attitudes become the “rulers and organizers” of our personality.

In order to specialize, we must ruthlessly split off and repress competing attitudes, desires, and talents. In order to be productive at one thing, we must put aside others. There are exceptions to this generality as a few of us seem to follow a compressed version of the journey and pass quickly into its later stages—maturity and wisdom following brilliant success at an early age. Albert Einstein’s life was an example of such a journey. But this situation is rare, and most people who think they are moving at an accelerated pace have simply lost their ground and are spiraling upward into the realm of fantasy and self-delusion.

We must keep our personality one-sided at this stage in order to come to grips with life effectively. We simply cannot do everything at once. In the process, while we are developing ego strength and a robust persona (the “rulers”), we are also continuing to create our own shadow (the “others”). This area of our psyche contains the darker aspects of ourselves that did not fit the form and identity we chose to develop. The shadow is the place to which our Titans and giants have been banished, along with much of our barbarian and animal nature. And, depending on our circumstances, our noble Hector, our alluring Helen, our imposing Caesar, our pious Pope, or perhaps our religious fanatic as well as our criminal may also be found there, along with many others. Thus, our shadow contains characteristics that are both positive and negative. What must be clear by now is that for us to have an identity, to have substance in our personality and in the world, means inevitably that we also have a shadow.

The figures in our shadow are often paradoxical. Our self-righteous Pope, for example, may actually be our repressed longing for spirituality. And so, when we reach an emotional plateau after having compromised our lives too long, we may find in this shadowland the disowned vitality we need for renewal. The energy of our unconscious criminal may reflect an outward life lived too rigidly in social conformity. But I am getting ahead of myself; this discussion will come later. The potential value or danger in

our shadow figures is yet to be discovered in our life story.

Note, though, that ordinarily when we are in young adulthood, we are moving briskly, full of energy and anticipation. The era of public persona building is not as shallow as it sometimes may sound, and the identity we build, though one-sided, forms the foundation for future transformations. Anyone familiar with the collected letters of Dr. Jung knows how much his profession and family meant to him. They were his anchor in practical reality, giving him emotional security throughout the vigorous and often perilous inner journey that was his life. In her discussion of mysticism in the Western tradition, Evelyn Underhill, an Anglican scholar, points out that strength and form in the everyday world are the necessary ingredients for spiritual transformation. She writes, “It is not by the education of the lamb, but by the hunting and taming of the wild intractable lion, instinct with vitality, full of ardor and courage, exhibiting heroic qualities on the sensual plane, that the Great Work is achieved.”⁸