

Ho, Yo, Bro & Woe:

The Four Men's Movement Archetypes

I was wading through the latest stack of men's movement junk mail. Understanding your sexuality: a men's trip to Thailand. A workshop on healing the addiction to attending workshops (workshopaholics). Vision quest in Costa Rica. I never understood why those vision quests cost so much, what with no hotel and little food expenses. How to start a twelve step group for those in your area who can't walk into the self help men's section of a bookstore without buying something. And one of my favorites: Revitalize your life by making your own drum, as Rumi is recited to live muzurka music. The concepts are real, only the names have been changed to protect the innocent. Anyway I was struck with the fact that collectively with all these explorations, we are creating four new male archetypes, which help us discard old roles and embrace new rules. More research needs to be done, but current data indicates that the following summaries represent the predominant features.

HO: When one invokes this archetype, one is calling forth the power of amen, metoxyhosin, a tribal affirmative grunt, a way of forcefully speaking one's agreement with a sense of uncompromised YES. The person in touch with HO has let in the voice of the heart. They have mastered the first point of power of a men's group: they show up. Not only have they shown up, but they are eager to demonstrate that they have listened with an intensity usually reserved for speaking. HO provides immediate feedback, as in a Ho meter or reading of the group, a new viva voce, that detects if one has indeed spoken their truth from the heart. If the person speaking is Ho hum, then a quick HO may be used by the group as a method of getting someone who is rambling to hurry up and pass the talking stick already. Such use is still considered experimental. HO is one of the four roots of the men's movement. Its source is the various *primitive* cultural traditions that we borrow

because we have lost so many of our own through the twin cultural demons of technology and television. But that is another mythic journey. As a Native American friend said: "my men's group has been around a few thousand years."

The shadow side of this archetype is to be gung Ho, or so possessed that one attends every possible workshop in a frantic attempt to avoid really working on oneself. Another shadow aspect is competing for the most HOs after you have said something, and being disappointed that someone else got more than you.

YO: This archetypal summons is used by initiated males as the appropriate shout across a crowded mall, an invitation to deep intimacy, to entering a magic circle. As distinguished from yowling or yodeling, it is believed to be a mythopoetic form of "what's happening?", reflecting its roots in the days of yore of the YOruba people. Their wisdom is so often quoted in the men's movement and their concept of a crossroads where the spirits are attracted by drums and stories often holds true in our own gatherings. Yo is also a call to the yonder, to explore that which is mysterious and deep. It corresponds to the second point of power in a men's group: pay attention. Calling forth this archetype, as in "Yo what's really going on here?" can be extremely beneficial as you wonder and wander around in the deep ashes of emotional muck. Yo also reflects that moment when the fire bursts into flames and comes alive clearing away the confusion of smoky embers, eagerly licking the taste of new wood. Hanta Yo! Clear the way!

The shadow side of this power is scurrying about with complete lack of focus on what really needs to change in your life, as in Yo Yo. Or thinking that a rite of passage will transform you without any other effort, as in YOhimbe, a quick fix drug used for male impotence.

Ho, Yo, Bro & Woe:

from page 1

BRO: This archetype reflects the Jungian roots of the men's movement. It is the male energy that lies between your puer and your senex. Its essence is the brotherhood, the loose conglomeration of men who are willing to take a broadsword to the traditional trappings of manhood and instead broach subjects other than football and cars with each other. Its power is that it is okay to lean on me, to hug me, to ask for what you want. Bro corresponds to the third point of power in a men's group: speak your truth. Be bromeliaceous! Go for the juice, cut through the thorns of fear and share deeply. Some have speculated that this men's movement archetype is derived from Brothel, and that it represents a willingness to even help each other move through our unconscious and obvious collective sexual confusion.

The shadow side of this archetype is a persistent sense of homophobia, despite knowing better. It manifests as a feeling of discomfort around men who

have a different sexual preference than you do. Regardless of sexual choices, we are all men and must affirm the right of each man to his sexual preference. When we do not, or when we in any way make the brotherhood exclusive or not available to all races and ethnicities, we have indeed entered the shadows. Recently the shadow side of Bro has begun to manifest itself in an endless search for the perfect men's group, or in a mild form, of feeling that you have the wrong partner in a dyad exercise during a workshop.

WOE: The 12 step programs represent this final archetypal root of the men's movement. Woe is letting go of looking good when you are feeling bad. It is also the power of "laughing wild amidst severest woe," with the deep realization that you are not alone in your suffering. It is a potent reminder that we are here to help each other, not hurt each other. It corresponds to the fourth point of power in a men's group: let go of

expectations. Like rocks in your pockets, expectations weigh you down and diminish your ability to express what you feel in the moment. Rather than denying, minimizing, trivializing or intellectualizing your emotions, Woe encourages you to feel them fully.

The shadow aspect can be summed up in two phrases: woe is me, and woe be gone. Both reflect neurotic suffering: being too preoccupied with, or leaving too quickly the realm of grief. Woe takes as long as it takes, and it comes in waves. It cannot be forced, or rushed. Competition about who is better at feeling feelings is another shadow aspect of WOE. Olympic crying contests are definitely not part of the agenda.

Try these on the next time you are at a gathering. Play with them individually at first. Invoking these archetypes all at once and calling them into a council can get pretty wild. Yo bro, what's new with your woe? Ho!

Victor LaCerva