

## EXERCISE

### THE MEMORIES

Use a journal or your smartphone to record these answers. Don't filter them. Let it be a stream of consciousness. No one will see these—you can shred the pages afterward if you want, although I suggest keeping them so you can look back in three months to see how far you've progressed! While you can reexamine all of the memories that you write down, I've never found this to be necessary. Once the core memories are reinterpreted and released, the other memories lose their relevance and emotional charge. Write down every memory you have in response to the following question for your archetype:

*Nurturer*—When have you felt emotionally neglected?

*Wonder Woman*—When have you felt excluded or not fully accepted?

*Femme Fatale*—When have you felt less than because of the way you looked?

*Ethereal*—When have you felt alone in this world?

The responses I hear most frequently include feeling neglected by family members struggling with illness, addiction, or alcoholism; not fitting in at school because of your clothes; having less money than your school friends; being teased about a physical feature; a parent obsessed with their own looks; humiliation in front of the class; and a parent not supporting their child's passion.

If none of the questions above provokes any emotions, could being in denial be a way to make yourself feel more acceptable? Push yourself to look a little deeper.

### THE EMOTION

What emotion do these memories evoke? (It's most often shame, sadness, or disappointment.)

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Which two memories are the most emotionally upsetting for you? Circle these. These are your core memories.

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**THE JUDGMENT**

What judgment are you attaching to these memories?

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The core memories have a judgment attached to them. There's an assumption that says, "It's not okay to—(insert word)" (e.g., be overweight, be poor, get things wrong, be alone, be emotional, wear the wrong clothes).

**THE PROTECTIVE PATTERNS**

Now take the time to reflect on how these judgments are affecting your behavior. Answer each of these questions in turn, regardless of your archetype.

- 1. What behaviors have you put in place to shield yourself from that unpleasant emotion?

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- 2. What do you do (or not do) in an effort to get people to like, accept, and value you?

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3. Do these patterns show up in your relationship with food?

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Take your time to work through these questions, and don't move on to the next one until you have answered the previous one. Your core memories will evoke powerful feelings within you that may surprise you at first, especially if you haven't thought about these memories in a long time. Don't let this upset you. Once you recognize the influence of the past, you can consciously start to dismantle your behavioral patterns.