

Which INNER CHILD Are You?



Part I in the Sleepy Phoenix WHO AM I? series

The Inner Child and Creative You

I became fascinated with archetypes over 30 years ago and have taught workshops on the 12 basic archetypes explored by Carl Jung, Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. This realization was later enhanced by mythologist Joseph Campbell and Carol Myss. It is the Inner Child that excites me as I explore my own creativity. It is the Inner Child that determines our creative urge. Our creative side is linked to our spiritual self.

We've all heard about the Inner Child. Caroline Myss identified six basic inner child archetypes in *Sacred Contracts* and *Archetype Cards*. Some of these types are positive and express joy and fearlessness, while the others define our blocks and anxieties. Most of us have inner children who are wounded, abandoned, and the cause of much angst. But guess what? This angst seems to help spur our creativity and may even help us persevere and complete our projects.

The Select Your Child Archetype Questionnaire will help you determine which Child archetype is playing in your head and heart. As you read the descriptions, however, you may decide that your Inner Child is actually someone completely different. Go with your intuition.

I've also included a few tips and techniques for connecting and communicating with this delightful reservoir of creativity and spirituality.

I hope you will enjoy this process of self-exploration,

Ann

Magical or Innocent Child

Magical Child evokes all that is good in childhood, all that we want for ourselves and our children. It is most likely to be present in the early years of childhood.

- Magical Child is enchanted and enchanting.
- This Child encapsulates wisdom, courage and imagination.
- Everything is possible for Magical Child.
- Sometimes Magical Child feels an absence of possibilities.
- Pessimism and depression rule.
- Magical Child lives in a world of fantasy in an attempt to maintain the wonderful illusion.

Do you “live in your head”? Return to what the Buddhists refer to as “beginner’s mind.” This childlike approach can lead to hidden wonders.



Divine Child

The Divine Child is rarely selected as an Inner Child profile and is uniquely unable to defend against negative forces.

- Related to Innocent and Magical Child, Divine Child is distinguished by a redemptive mission.
- Divine Child is associated with the Christ energy.

*Did you have a mystical event that you felt you could never talk about?
Explore this side of your life through your Divine Child.*



Eternal Child

- Eternal Child is “stuck” between the stages of life.
- No foundation is laid for a functioning adulthood.
- This state of mind is sometimes referred to as the “Peter Pan complex.”

Do you have trouble “growing up” ? Do you find that life is delayed and you are waiting for something to happen before you can move forward?



Nature Child

Nature Child feels an intimacy and ability to bond with animals and plants.

- Tender emotions combine with an inner toughness.
- Nature Child holds strong survival capabilities and is highly resilient.
- Animals are an essential part of Nature Child's wellbeing.
- Nature Child communicates with critters.
- This child needs animals to bond psychically and spiritually.
- Nature Child may be an excellent gardener and lover of all things green.

Do you feel more comfortable with animals and plants?



Orphan/Abandoned Child

The Orphan is often the main character in many children's stories. This protagonist begins feeling alienated and sets out on a journey of self-discovery and adventure.

- Often Orphan Child and Abandoned Child are combined.
- They both feel that they are not part of the family.
- They ask, "Was I switched at birth? Am I a changeling? A space alien?"
- They often develop an early sense of independence: "I'm on my own."
- One or both parents are alcoholic, chemically dependent or workaholic.
- The parents weren't there for either Orphan Child or Abandoned Child.
- Orphan Child, Abandoned Child and Wounded Child may develop into the Victim as adults. This is why it's so important to heal the Child.

Does a painful memory arise from feeling you were never accepted as a family member? Did you grow up in a family where "children should be seen and not heard"? Were you listened to? Were you seen?



Wounded Child

Wounded Child holds memories of neglect, abuse, and other traumas endured in childhood.

- Wounded Child's emotions may manifest as self-pity or blame.
- Wounded Child may grow up to become the Victim archetype.
- Wounded Child may resist moving on through forgiveness.
- This trauma may open up the Wounded Child to compassion.
- Wounded Child may choose a profession that helps others in need.
- Wounded Child is the most likely to grow up into the archetype of Wounded Healer, or shaman.



QUESTIONNAIRE

Select Your Child Archetype

Circle Y for yes and N for no for whether you closely identify with the statement. The child with the most points is most likely the one you will select as your major Inner Child archetype. If you feel strongly that another child is a better match, follow that intuitive response.

Magical Child

I see beauty in all things.	Y	N
I have a strong imagination and believe that everything is possible	Y	N
The world is a horrible place and I prefer to live in a fantasy world.	Y	N
Total _____		

Divine Child

I am filled with innocence, purity and seek redemption.	Y	N
I feel a special union with the Divine.	Y	N
I am unable to defend myself against negative forces.	Y	N
Total _____		

Eternal Child

I am consistently unreliable.	Y	N
I feel eternally young and will never grow old.	Y	N
I am dependent on others to keep me safe.	Y	N
Total _____		

Nature Child

I love animals and prefer being with them.	Y	N
I am resilient and will survive, no matter what.	Y	N
I sometimes find myself abusing animals, people, the environment.	Y	N

Total _____

Orphan/Abandoned Child

I have never felt that I was a member of my family. Y N

I am independent and don't need anybody. Y N

I don't care about my family but I have my friends. Y N

Total _____

Wounded Child

I am drawn to helping children and adults who have been abused. Y N

I remember everything about my childhood—all the slights and hurts. Y N

My childhood is responsible for everything bad that happened to me. Y N

Total _____

Inner Child with most points _____

CONGRATS!

You have taken the first step towards meeting your Inner Child!

Tips and Techniques

SIX STRATEGIES

1. Keep an open mind. It's OK to feel a little uncertain about the idea of the Inner Child.
2. Look to children for guidance.
3. Revisit childhood memories.
4. Spend time doing things you used to enjoy.
5. Talk to your Inner Child.
6. Talk to a therapist.

TECHNIQUES

As a writer, my go-to technique is journaling. But the main thing to remember is that any of the expressive arts will help tap into the inner you. I discovered that I had more than one Inner Child and that each represented different aspects of myself, and sometimes different times in my childhood. The thing that transformed my experience with the Inner Child was to acknowledge that she (and sometimes he) existed. Learning to pay attention and listening was an essential part of healing this essential relationship.

JOURNAL YOUR INNER CHILD

“But I’m not a writer!” you may say.

Try recording on your cell phone.

Write a letter.

Try these writing prompts:

I remember when ...

It me hurt when ...

My favorite memory as a child is ...

Frame your journaling as a question-and-answer exercise

Allow your adult self to ask your child self questions, then listen to how the child responds. Maybe your child self is small, vulnerable and in need of protection and support. Maybe, on the other hand, it's joyfully thriving. Answering any questions your child self has can help you begin healing inner vulnerabilities or distress.

It's normal to feel a little nervous about what your Inner Child wants to share, especially if you've buried some negative past experiences or difficult emotions. But think of this exercise as a way to establish and strengthen a bond between your current self and your child self.

Journal as your Inner Child

For this journaling exercise, set your present self aside for the moment and "channel" your child self. Try photos or a brief visualization exercise to help recall how you felt at the specific age you're intending to explore. Once you're in the right mindset, write down a few memories and any emotions you associate with those events. Try not to think about what you're writing. Just let the thoughts flow onto the paper as they come up. Expressing them in an unchecked way can help you get to the heart of your Inner Child's pain and joy.

Write with your non-dominant hand

This journaling technique is a classic for connecting to your subconscious mind. Try it.

EXPRESSIVE ARTS

Expressive arts often allow us to open up to the creative and spiritual archetypes that are deeply connected to the Inner Child. Use any technique that you helps to lower your guard and allows you to flow with nature, colors, textures. Just be.

Art Classes

Collage cards

Gardening

Collage Cards

I found that collage cards worked really well as a method for connecting with my Inner Child. I learned to hold dialogues with the cards and ask questions. The Child cards expressed relief at being heard and often the initial hurt went away simply from being listened to. I learned many techniques from Seena Frost's *SoulCollage: An intuitive collage process for individuals and groups*. Online workshops and retreats are also available.

LISTEN

Listen to what your Inner Child has to say. After opening the door to a connection with your Inner Child, it's important to listen to the feelings that burble to the surface. These feelings often come up in situations that trigger strong emotions or discomfort. You might notice:

- Unmet needs
- Vulnerability
- Guilt or shame
- Anxiety

If you can trace these feelings back to specific childhood events, you may realize similar situations in your adult life that trigger the same responses.

MEET WITH A THERAPIST

When in doubt, find a professional who is trained to help people open up emotionally and explore the vast inner scape. Friends and books may take you a significant distance towards self-discovery, but a therapist can be an important part of your team.

WHO AM I? — THE JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME

Know Thyself.

Socrates said it. He got it from the Delphic Oracle. You've probably heard it all of your life. What does it really mean? Answering the question "Who Am I?" may take a lifetime to answer.

Meeting your Inner Child may be the beginning of this journey.