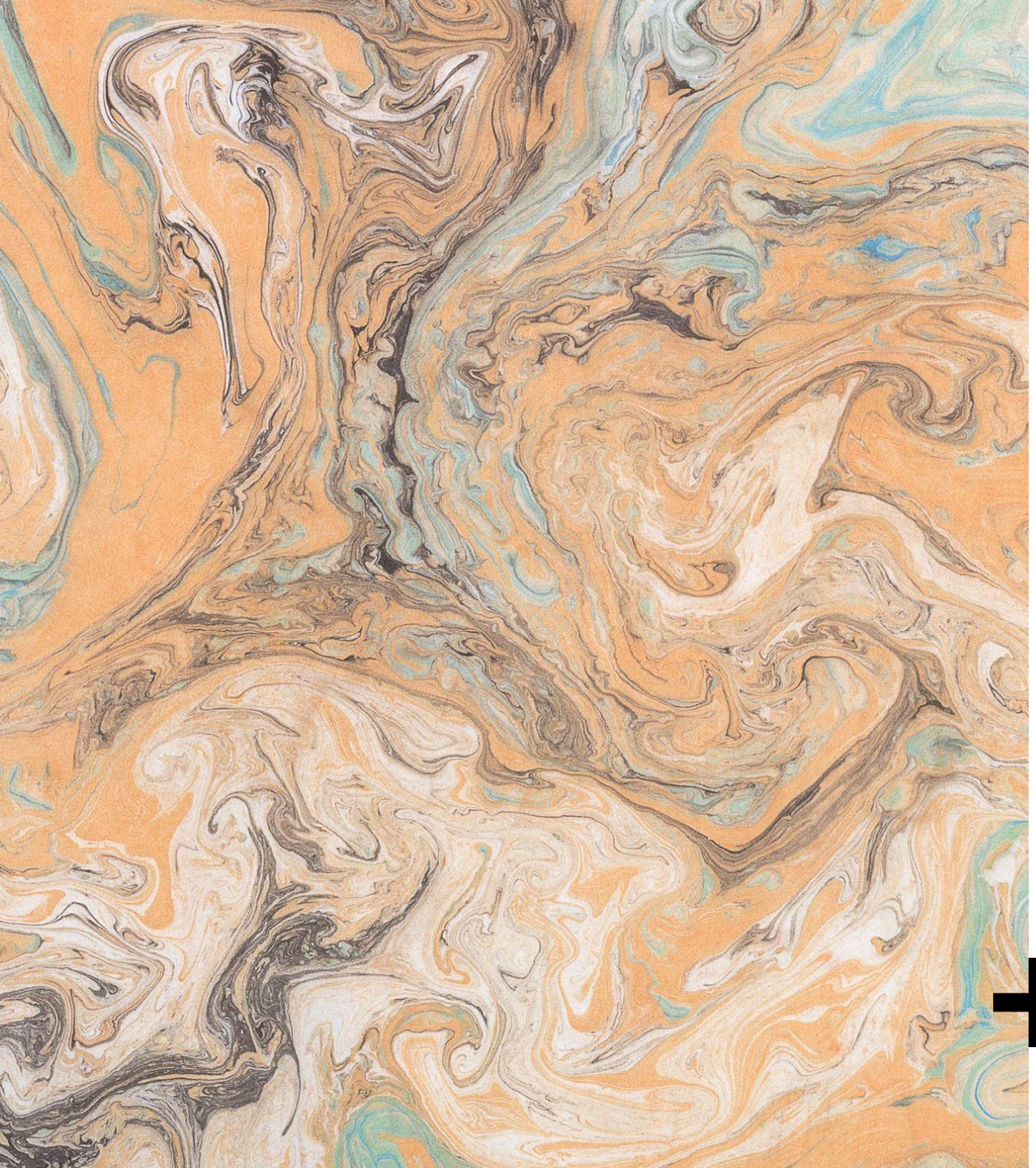


Beyond a Shadow of a Doubt – Harnessing the Power of Psychology in the Courtroom to Win Your Client's Case

Michael DeBlis III, Esq.



Dedicated to my dad. The best father, law partner, and role-model a son could have.



Disclaimer

- I am a criminal defense attorney. Therefore, this presentation is heavily skewed towards defending those accused of committing serious crimes. We're all they've got.

The More You Know …

– I come from the perspective that the more you know about human nature and human expression, the better an advocate you will be for your client. After all, the work we do is centered around helping people who have been wronged in some way or who have been charged with committing a criminal offense and face the loss of their liberty.

An uncanny similarity between the job of an actor & the job of a trial attorney

- Just like an actor gathers background information about the character they're portraying in order to bring him to life on stage, an attorney must gather background information about the client they are representing in order to reveal the human element to the jury and to help them understand why the only just verdict is one in your favor.
- Don't be afraid to tell the jury what you want them to do! It's not pandering. State explicitly what verdict you want them to return.

The Imagination

– The imagination undergirds everything. We learn to be human through the imagination. It is the imagination that distinguishes us from every other species. Sure, a beaver can build a damn. But can a beaver build a skyscraper, write a novel, sing a ballad, or launch a rocket into outer space? As humans, we have an enormous capacity to imagine, “What if?” And this allows for empathy.



Performance or taking a “Pass?”

- The word, “Performance” immediately induces fear and creates tension. Your mind begins racing with thoughts of: “I’ve got to be good!” “What will other people think of me?” “Am I going to fall flat on my face?” “Will I freeze up and forget what I was going to say?” I call this, “Head fuck FM.”
- You can replace this toxic self-talk with, “I’m right where I am. I’ll admit it. I’ll work from where I am instead of where I wish I was.”
- Instead of looking at what you do in a courtroom as having to hit a “bulls-eye,” how about changing your mindset to, “Let me just take a pass at this?” As my instructor so elegantly stated, this is where all of the easter eggs or golden nuggets lie. In other words, just see what’s there before you have an obligation to make a wedding cake out of it.

Fear

- Fear looms large in the courtroom, especially when you are representing a client charged with a heinous offense.
- I turn to Shakespeare for inspiration. Shakespeare walked down the street and tried not to lie about what he saw. Shakespeare dealt with the theme of “fear” over and over again in his plays, none more poignant than in Macbeth.
- When Macbeth began to waiver about killing Duncan, Lady M began to consider whether or not to stay in this relationship.

Fear

– She was trying to determine what the cause of her husband's hesitation was. In so many words, she was saying, "If you mean that you can't commit the act out of moral consequences, I can't stay in this relationship. But if you're afraid, I can deal with that. I'm a powerful woman and I can work with your fears." "I'm afraid" is hard for any man to admit, much less a ruthless warrior like Macbeth. It's such a human thing that we all deal with. And Macbeth is no exception. Lady M asks Macbeth, "Are you afraid?" And like a shrink, she begins to work on his fear.

Reflections on Opening Statements & Closing Arguments

– During opening and closing, your access to the jury is immediate and complete.

– Engage the jury. You must be in conversation with them. The best closing arguments are those where there is a seduction of logic that invites the jury to listen and not to judge. Allow the jury to “dream” around you such that they are hanging on your every word.

– And remember, when you have nothing, you still have your sense of humor!

Sir Anthony Hopkins



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Profound Quote from Anthony Hopkins

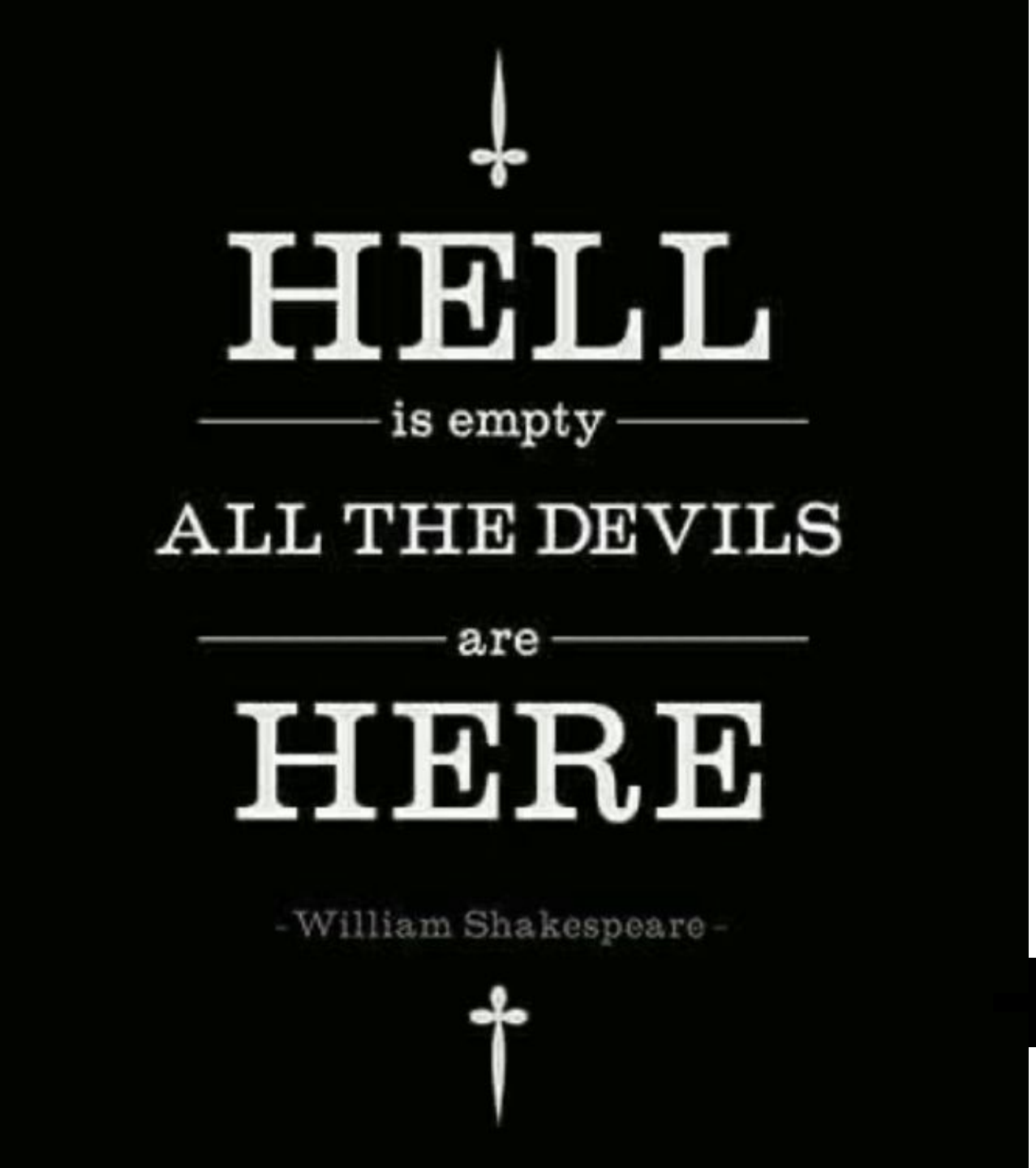
– “My philosophy is: What people say about me is none of my business. I am who I am and do what I do. I expect nothing and accept everything. And that makes life easier. We live in a world where funerals are more important than the deceased, marriage is more important than love, looks are more important than the soul. We live in a packaging culture that despises content.”



My Inspiration for this program



Patrick Page's One-Man Show



“It’s like watching a chameleon change hues before your eyes.” – The New York Times


—— ——"PERFECTION...One of America's
greatest classical actors."
~The Wall Street Journal

In His Own Words



+



Your Client: The Villain?

- As difficult as this might be to accept, the first impression that a jury makes of a client charged with a criminal offense is that of a “villain.” This is because the first thing that they hear about the case is what’s contained in the indictment and that would sully anyone’s reputation.
- After trying some serious cases, I got to thinking a lot about this label. It impacts me not just as a criminal defense attorney, but also as an actor.

Anti-social Behavior

– As an actor, I’ve played my share of Shakespearean villains. I’ve always been fascinated by anti-social behavior – behavior in which people cause harm to one another, to wit what villains do. Some of the questions that arose in my exploration of villains was, “Why do we harm one another? Why do we love one another when it can be torturous?”

Why do people harm one another?

- With everything going on in the world today, there can be no better time to address this question “head on.”
- According to Patrick Page, “People do bad things when they feel like they are *justified* in doing them.” The quote, “Hurt people hurt people” could not be more true.
- Shakespeare wrestled with the idea of what we should do to break this vicious cycle of “I’ve been injured. Now I want to injure back.”

Shakespeare – The Good Samaritan

- What I love about Shakespeare is that he refuses to write people off. When others get judgmental, he gets curious.
- He wonders very deeply, “Why might that person behave that way? Under what circumstances might he behave in that way?”



Villains are Complicated

- As ashamed as I am to admit this, when I first tackled villains, I painted them with a broad stroke.
- By broad stroke, I mean as scheming, plotting, and conniving Machiavellian types not unlike the Sesame Street character, “Count von Count,” complete with his iconic, ”Ah-Ah-Ah!” staccato laugh.

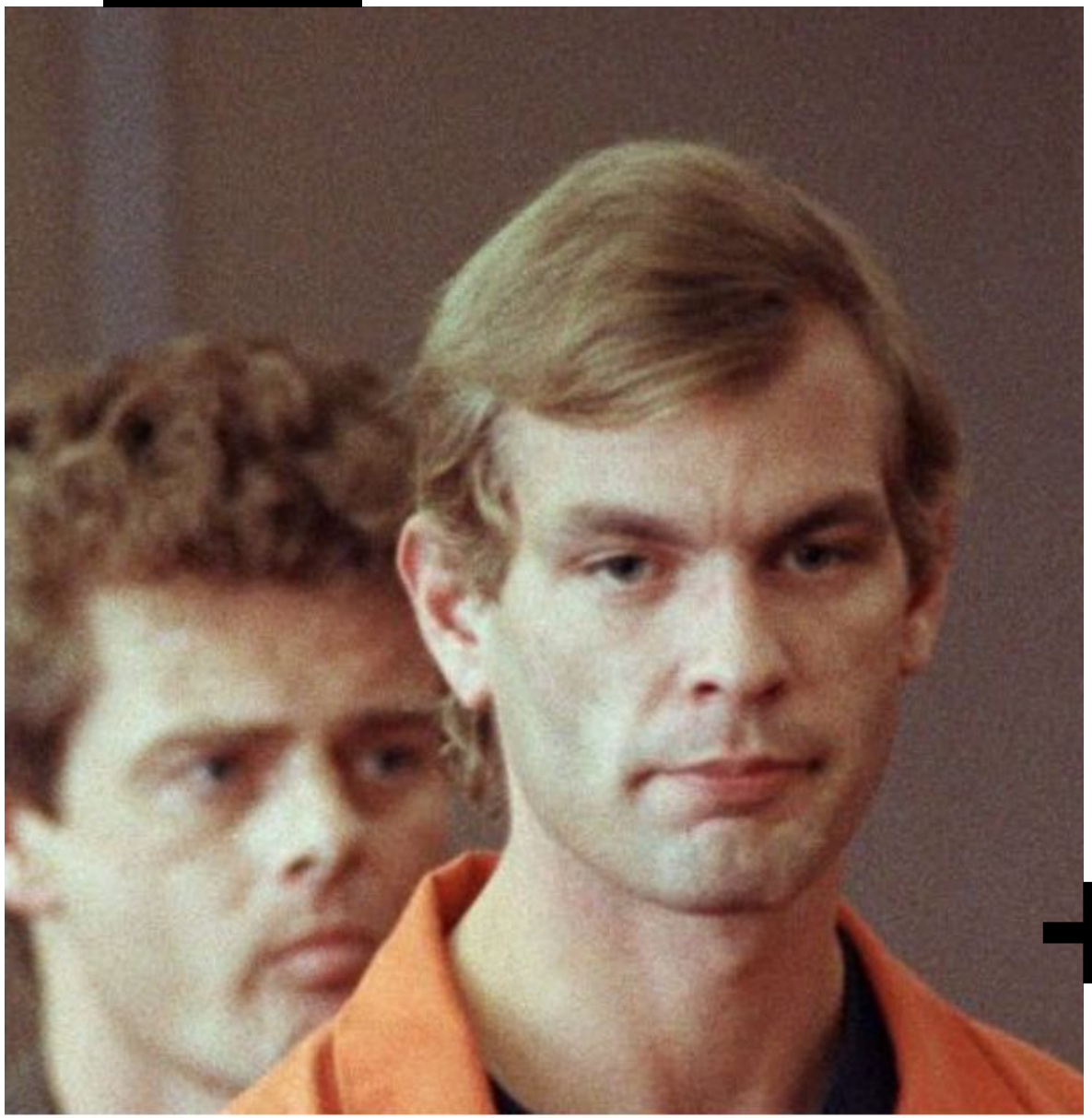
Common Thread Among Villains

- But I've learned over the years that a villain is anything but that. They are far from being one-dimensional and static. Indeed, villains are dynamic human beings with backstories just like everyone else.
- According to Shakespeare, a common thread that seems to connect all villains – from those with a conscience to those without a conscience (i.e., psychopaths) – is that they view life as a game and they are playing it to win.
- It’s only when we dig into these backstories that we discover the hidden story that explains why this person behaves the way they do today.



Villains are “Broken”

- At their very core, villains are broken. In playing them, I’ve learned to connect with this brokenness: both their physical and psychological brokenness. In playing these characters, the actor must engage as deeply as he can with those same questions that Shakespeare wrestled with or he won’t be able to lift them out of the text. In all of the instances where I've played bad people who have done bad things, I’ve had to find that in myself. It’s empathy on a level unlike any other.



Empathy on a Level Unlike Any Other

– When asked how do you prepare yourself to play a villain, Patrick Page answered, “If you can’t love the character, you can’t play him. Jeffrey Dahmer was one of the most infamous serial killers of all time. In one of the most exquisite displays of paternal love, Jeffrey’s father loved his son to the very end.”



Human Beings all have the same DNA

- When I tackled the role of Richard III, I knew that I had to find a Richard III in myself. My way in was that I knew that there was a part of me that was ambitious, like Richard himself. Similarly, there was a part of me that was self-righteous, like Brutus in “Julius Caesar.” I have all of these things burning inside me like a raging inferno based on the simple fact that I am human.

Empathy for Your Client

- But unless I could look at them, I believed that I was in great danger of projecting them onto other people (perhaps unknowingly) and behaving in ways that I would be ashamed of.
- There is something about being able to be the advocate for that man – being able to stand in his shoes, being able to look through his eyes – that appeals to me.
- And although the audience would then see a man who did terrible things, they might also see *why* that man did terrible things. Not to excuse those terrible things but to *understand* why he behaved that way.

Humanizing the Villain

- Humanizing the villain only heightens the tragedy or the drama. Looking at the nuances of a person's life, looking at the causes of what we might call “evil” is important because we're living in a time when intolerance, impatience, and hostility have replaced tolerance, kindness, and civility.

Popular Culture’s Love Affair with the Anti-Hero

- I think this has a lot to do with popular culture’s love affair with the anti-hero who reigns supreme in modern-day television – the person who does things that are morally wrong but who we nevertheless root for. That's Tony Soprano, Walter White (“Breaking Bad”), and Marty Byrde (“Ozark”).

Sheer Irony?

- It’s ironic how, on the one hand, there is this character on television who helps us to understand how otherwise good people might do bad things and then on the other hand, in our public life, we copy it to a "T" when we classify people as being “good" or “bad" based on nothing more than their political beliefs or what part of the world they come from.

Not Enough for Villain to Simply “be bad”

- When we see a villain nowadays, even in Marvel comics, the fan base expects them to be complicated. Look no further than Joaquin Phoenix’s portrayal of “Joker.” They expect them to have a motivation. They expect them to have a backstory. It's not enough for someone simply to be bad.

Hope

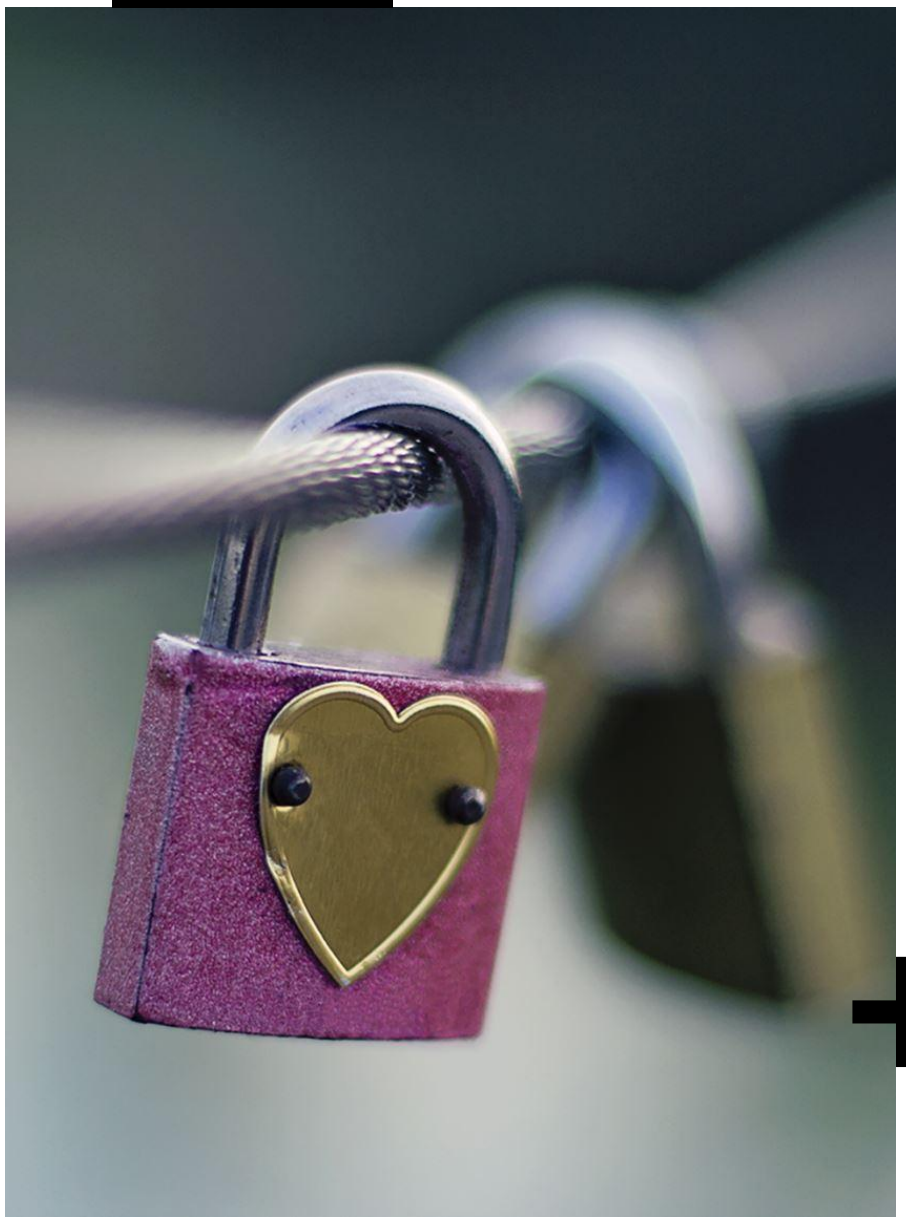
– And that gives us hope when we are defending a person accused of committing a heinous offense.



Profound Quote

- “I think I am a little terrified of people who identify too much with the hero, because to me it indicates a kind of shunning of their darker side, which we all inevitably have. And it is only in exploring that darker side of ourselves that we can find any light. We have to know the monster within us very thoroughly, and then we can go out and we can do good things. But if we think that monster doesn’t exist I think we’re in deep trouble.”

-- Patrick Page



Self-awareness: The Magic Sauce

- In order to be the advocate that our client so desperately needs in his time of crises, we as lawyers, must know our selves on a deep and intimate level. What comes from that level of awareness is a compassionate, empathetic, and caring lawyer who puts his client first and who fights relentlessly for justice in the courtroom. He is not afraid to show his own humanity and to reveal his own vulnerability when making impassioned pleas to the jury on behalf of his client. This is the hallmark of a great lawyer.

Gerry Spence

- Through a deep sense of self-awareness, we will be better equipped to do something that Gerry Spence calls, “crawl inside the hide of the client.” He uses this phrase as a metaphor for “tapping into another person’s experience in order to see things the way he saw them and feel them as he felt them.”

Walk a Mile in ‘His’ Shoes

- To me, this means putting ourselves in our clients’ shoes and entering the *matrix* — the very strange and unfamiliar world that our client inhabits.
- Once we slip into our client’s skin, we can see, hear, and feel the world from his point of view. In other words, we can share the emotion of the client.

Walk a Mile in ‘His’ Shoes

- Doing so fosters a deeper understanding of what formed this once bright-eyed and bushy-tailed child into the man he is today and why he now stands before a criminal judge dressed in an orange jumpsuit and restrained in handcuffs and shackles.

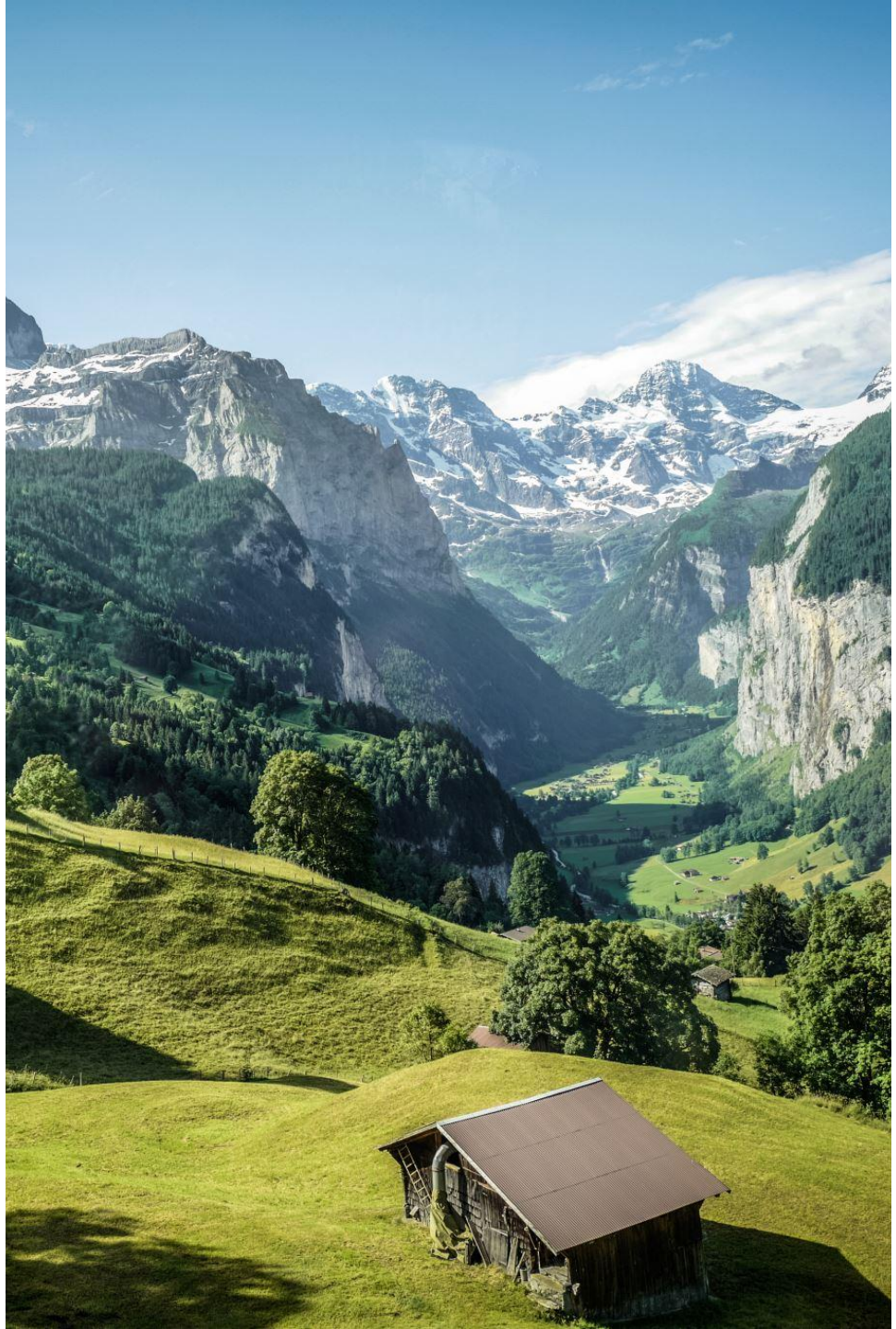
Walk a Mile in ‘His’ Shoes

- Understanding who your client is and his history is the master-key for unlocking your client’s story. Where has he come from? What has he done? What has he endured?



Walk a Mile in ‘His’ Shoes

- Slowly we begin to care and as we do, we acquire the power to cause others to care. As challenging as this might be, it is not the hardest part. The hardest part is shouting out to the world — from this dark and frightening place — what you see.

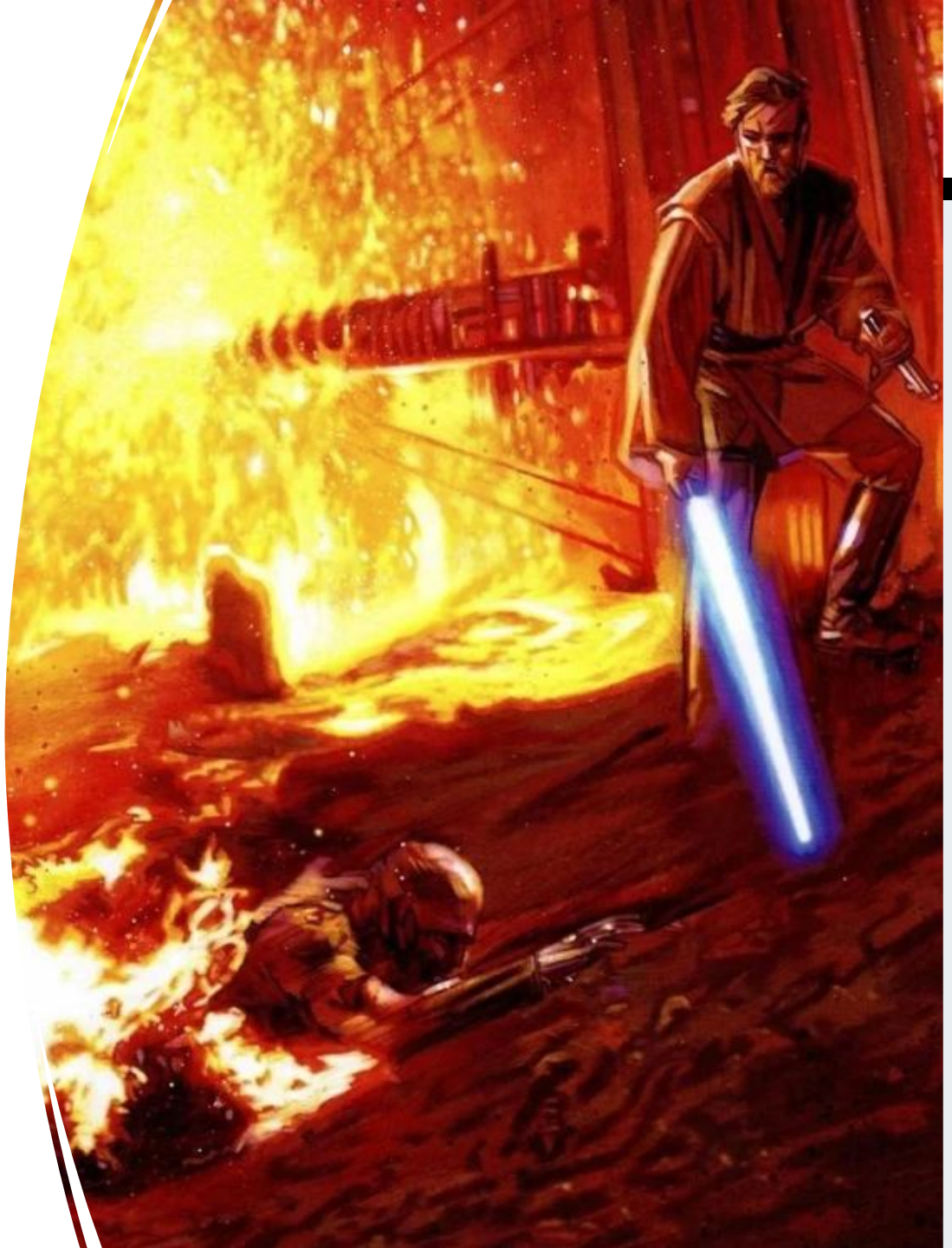


Walk a Mile in ‘His’ Shoes

- A disclaimer is in order here. The hide of a defendant in a criminal case is not a warm and cozy chalet located on the foot of the Swiss Alps.
- As Gerry Spence so eloquently states, “There is wretchedness there, not to mention pain and sorrow. There are always the scars of injustice and the evil mangling of the mind of the once innocent.”

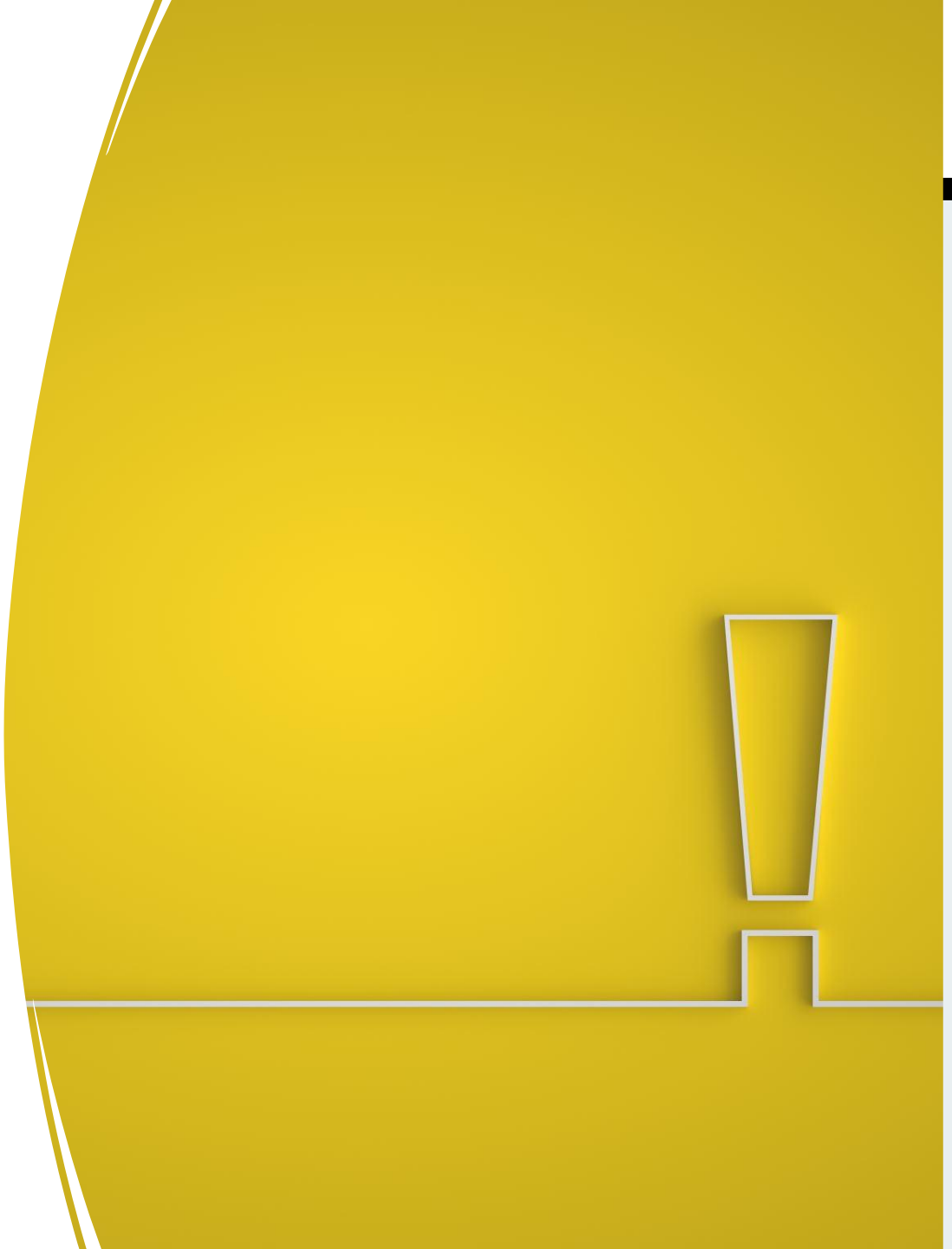
Walk a Mile in ‘His’ Shoes

- As graphic as it might be, when I think of shouting out to a jury the wretchedness I see in the dark underbelly of my client, the first image that comes to mind is the mangled body of Hayden Christensen’s character, Anakin Skywalker, being engulfed by lava and bursting into flames on the edge of an embankment on Mustafar.



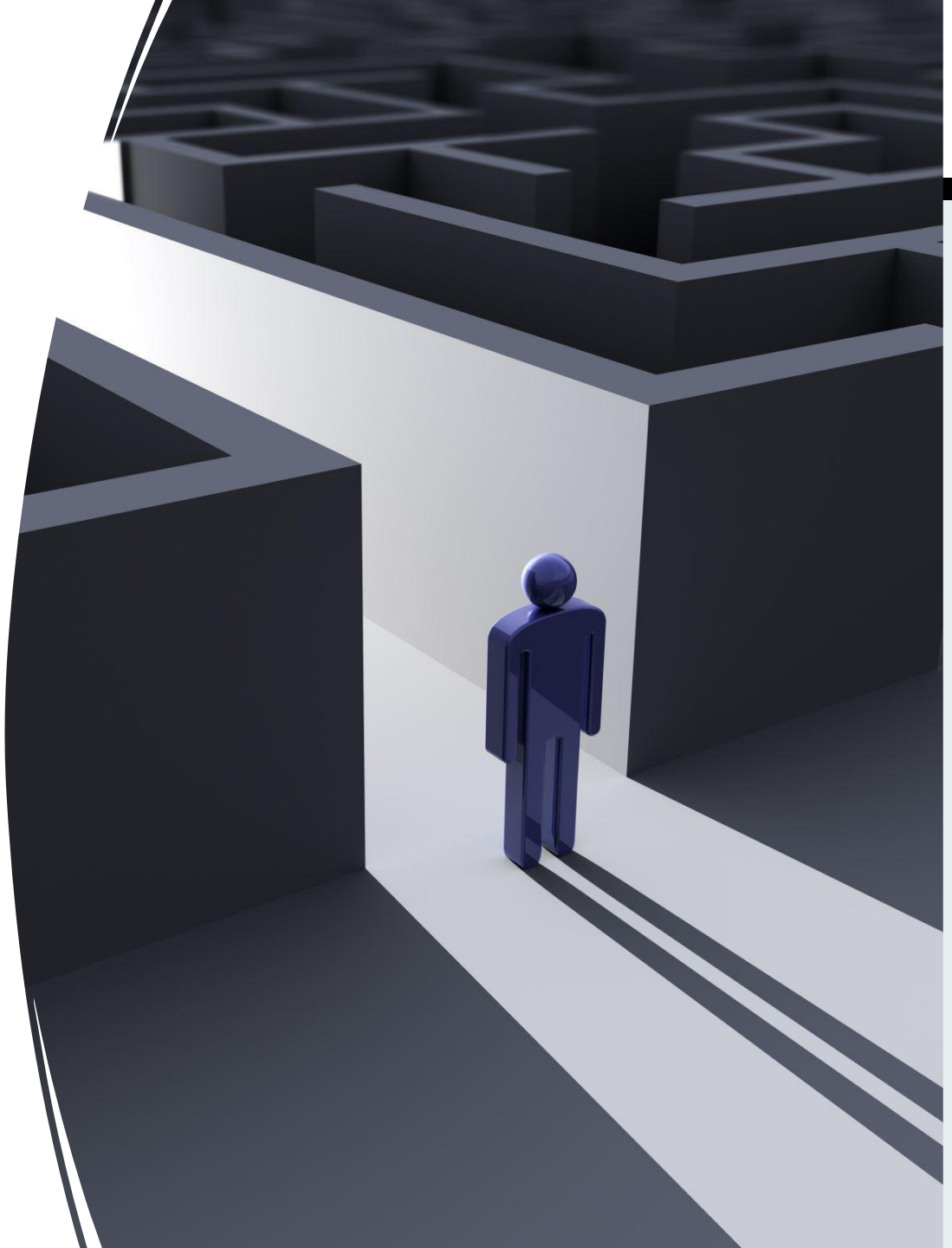
Walk a Mile in ‘His’ Shoes

- This disturbing scene teaches a valuable lesson. Hayden’s heart-wrenching cries and agonizing pain can be understood as his *argument*.
- By arguing out of his own sorrow, the audience was instantly able to relate to Anakin for the simple reason that we have all experienced sorrow before.



Walk a Mile in ‘His’ Shoes

- In this, I find the inspiration to never allow a client that I am representing to be judged on the bare fact of committing the crime itself (i.e., that he has “killed” or “raped”). The danger this poses is that a person who commits a heinous crime is hard to care about.



Walk a Mile in ‘His’ Shoes

- It is far too easy to judge and to criticize a person on the bare fact that he committed a crime because it relieves the jury of the responsibility of understanding “why.”



Walk a Mile in ‘His’ Shoes

- To me, there is no such thing as a set of “bare facts” that tell the whole story.
- As my grandfather once said, there are always three sides to a story: “Yours, mine, and the truth.” The same applies in a trial.



Walk a Mile in ‘His’ Shoes

- There is always another side to the state’s story.
- The other side is the world we do *not* see: a world that is personal, perhaps one that is as secret as the “Forbidden Forest.” The latter is the world that our clients inhabit. It is that part of the iceberg that remains hidden underneath the water, despite dwarfing the apex one hundred times over.





Walk a Mile in ‘His’ Shoes

- As lawyers, if we concern ourselves with nothing more than the bare facts, the trial becomes nothing more than a long guilty plea. But mitigating facts always lie beneath the surface waiting to be discovered. The challenge is in finding them.

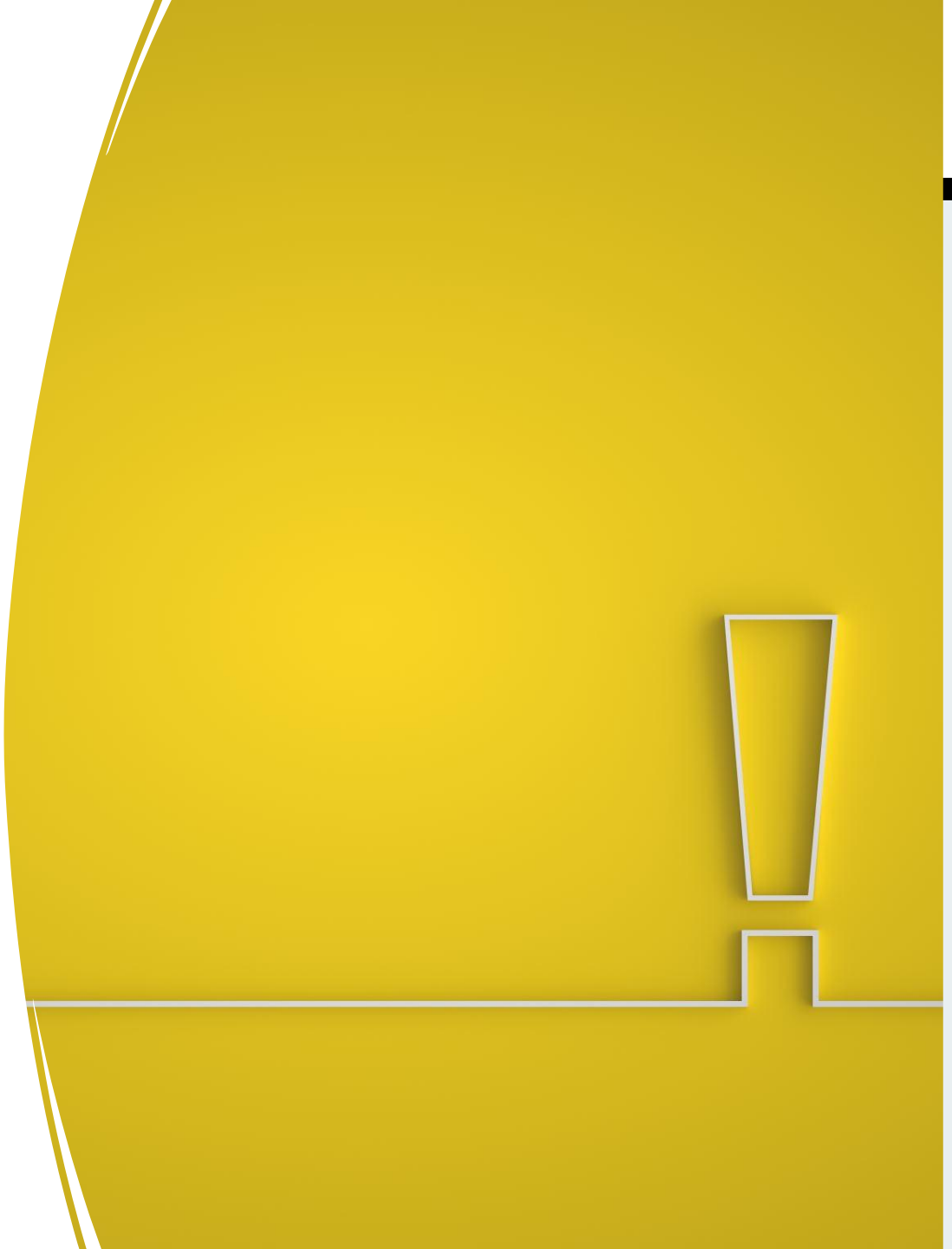


Walk a Mile in ‘His’ Shoes

- For those willing to take this risk, there is no greater reward. By the time the jury begins their deliberations, they will have no choice but to see your client as a son, a father, a brother, an uncle, a nephew endowed with the same rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness as every other human being on this planet, not to mention all of the hopes, dreams, and ambitions that burn like a fire in the human soul.

Caring

- As schmaltzy as this sounds, caring is at the core of every case.
- The first thing to ask yourself is, “Do I really care?”
- We have to find the humanity in our client before we can ask the jurors to see it. If you don’t care, how can you ask a jury to care? As Gerry Spence puts it, it’s like saying to the jury, “I want you to do what I can’t do myself.” Apathy has no place in the courtroom.



Caring

- Caring is the first step in transforming the client from a defendant to a person.



Caring

- Gerry Spence asks a provocative question: “How does one care for someone who has committed a heinous act?”
  - “How can you care for someone who is accused of raping a little girl and killing her?”
  - “How can you care for a serial killer?”
  - We’ve all been been ambushed by this question at some point in our careers.

Caring

- Fifteen years of being a defense attorney has helped me to reflect on this question.
- Too often the person that is before the jury is the first victim.
- Of course, a crime has been committed and there is a victim of that crime. But what about the *first* victim – the defendant, the person for whom you're defending? Was he the victim of a mother who didn't care or a father who abandoned him? Was he raped and/or abused as a child?

Caring

- A twist of fate could have changed his circumstances dramatically. For example, had he been raised by a loving and nurturing family, would he have dropped out of school, pledged his allegiance to a gang, and turned to a life of crime? Or, would he have gone to college and become a successful businessman, doctor, or lawyer?

Caring

- Are we condemning this person for what he did or because of the cards that he has been dealt in life?

Caring

- Gerry Spence uses a powerful metaphor:
    - You can take a little sweet wiggly tailed Spaniard pup and put the pup in a cage with bars and never pet the pup, and never love the pup.
    - This little pup who loves you and wiggles its tail and wants to be petted and accepted, you can stick it with sticks and refuse to feed it when it is hungry. You can put it in with other vicious dogs.

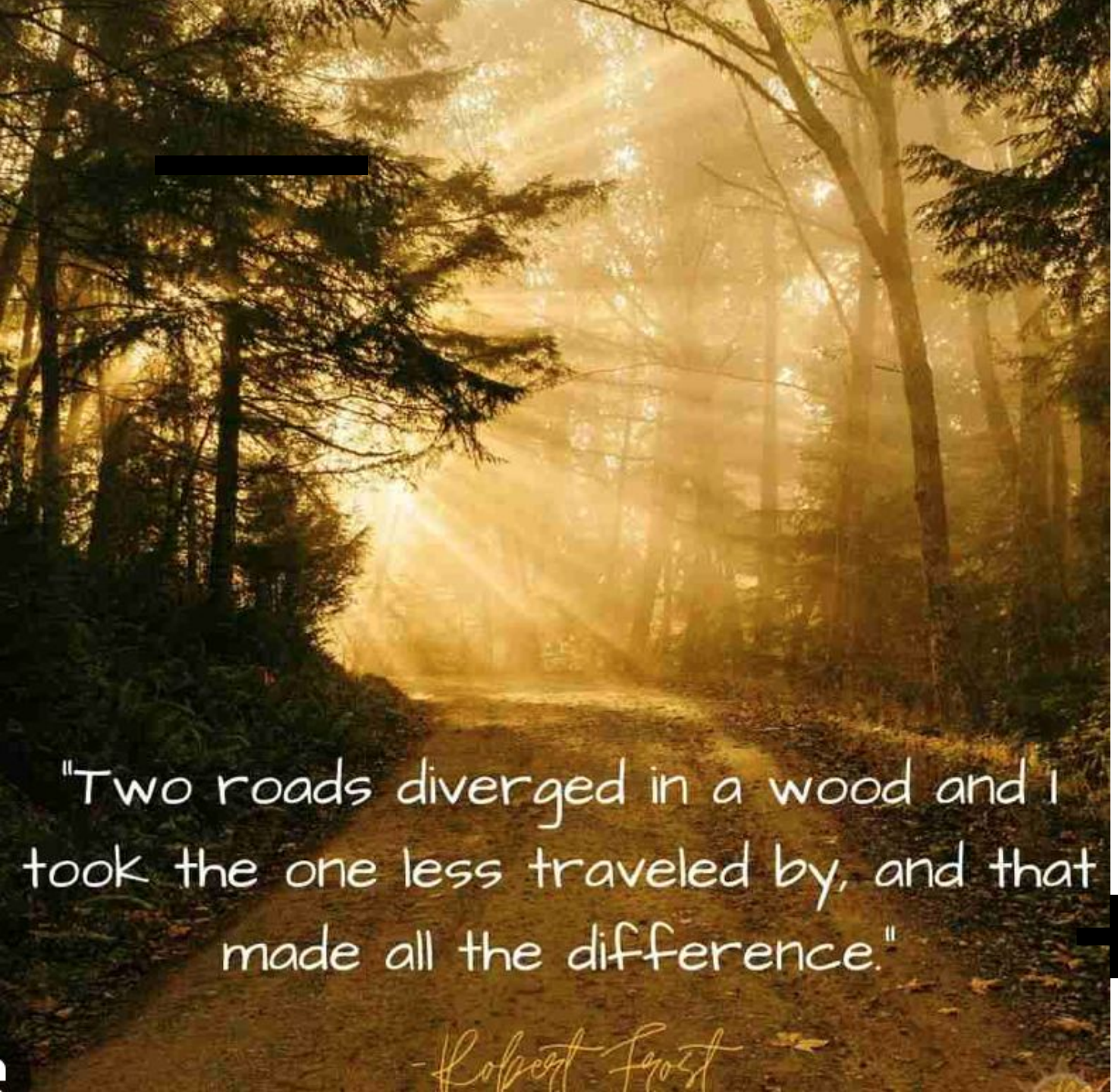


Caring

- And one day you can stick your finger in that cage and the pup will bite you – that sweet, gentle, innocent puppy.
- Should we kill the pup? He’s only entitled to one dog bite and he has bitten twice.

Caring

- Keys for Caring
  - Understand who your client is and know his history. Where has he come from? What has he done? What has he endured? What formed this “little puppy” into the person he is today?



The Journey

- Let's begin the journey into ourselves and see what we learn.

Robert Bly – The Little Book on the Human Shadow

- *When we were one or two years old we had what we might visualize as a 360-degree personality. Energy radiated out from all parts of our body and all parts of our psyche. A child running is a living globe of energy. We had a ball of energy, all right; but one day we noticed that our parents didn't like certain parts of that ball. They said things like: "Can't you be still?" Or "It isn't nice to try and kill your brother." Behind us we have an invisible bag, and the part of us our parents don't like, we, to keep our parents' love, put in the bag. "*
- *"We spend our life until we're twenty deciding what parts of ourself to put into the bag, and we spend the rest of our lives trying to get them out again"*

Robert Bly – The Little Book on the Human Shadow

- *The story says then that when we put a part of ourselves in the bag it regresses. It de-evolves toward barbarism. Suppose a young man seals a bag at twenty and then waits fifteen or twenty years before he opens it again. What will he find? Sadly, the sexuality, the wildness, the impulsiveness, the anger, the freedom he put in have all regressed; they are not only primitive in mood, they are hostile to the person who opens the bag. The man who opens his bag at forty-five or the woman who opens her bag rightly feels fear. She glances up and sees the shadow of an ape passing along the alley wall; anyone seeing that would be frightened.*
- *"Every part of our personality that we do not love will become hostile to us."*



Carl Jung:

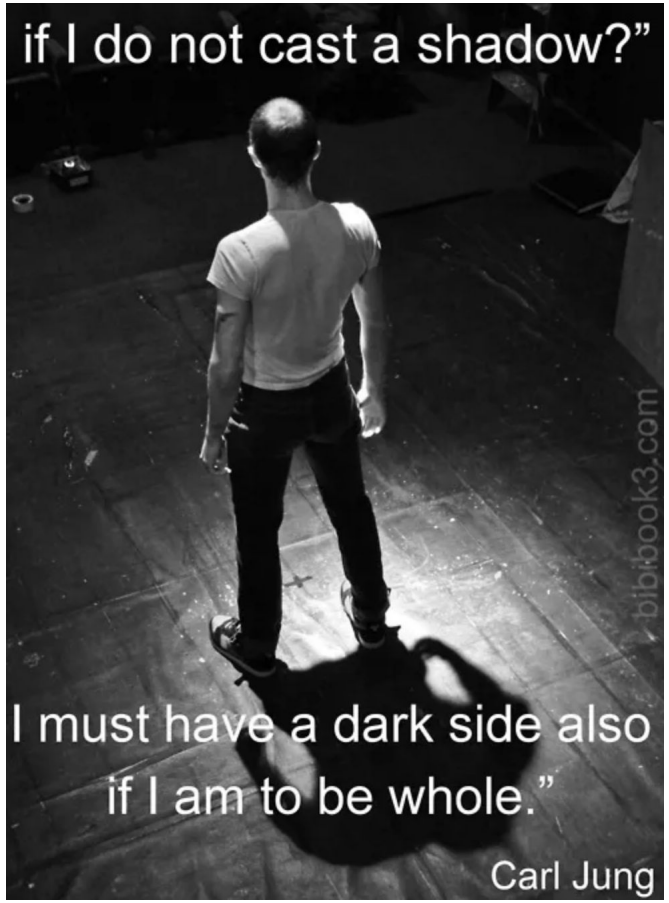
Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who founded analytical psychology. He was a prolific author, illustrator. and correspondent.

Carl Jung

- “A man who is unconscious of himself acts in a blind, instinctive way and is in addition fooled by all the illusions that arise when he sees everything that he is not conscious of in himself coming to meet him from outside as projections upon his neighbour.”

CARL JUNG AND THE SHADOW SELF

- “One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious. The latter procedure, however, is disagreeable and therefore not popular.”
- A key part of this transformation process is for an individual to confront their *shadow*, a term originated by Jung in relation to analytical psychology. The darkness, the greed, the envy, the aggression, the lust, all of that. And we say, “Not me.”

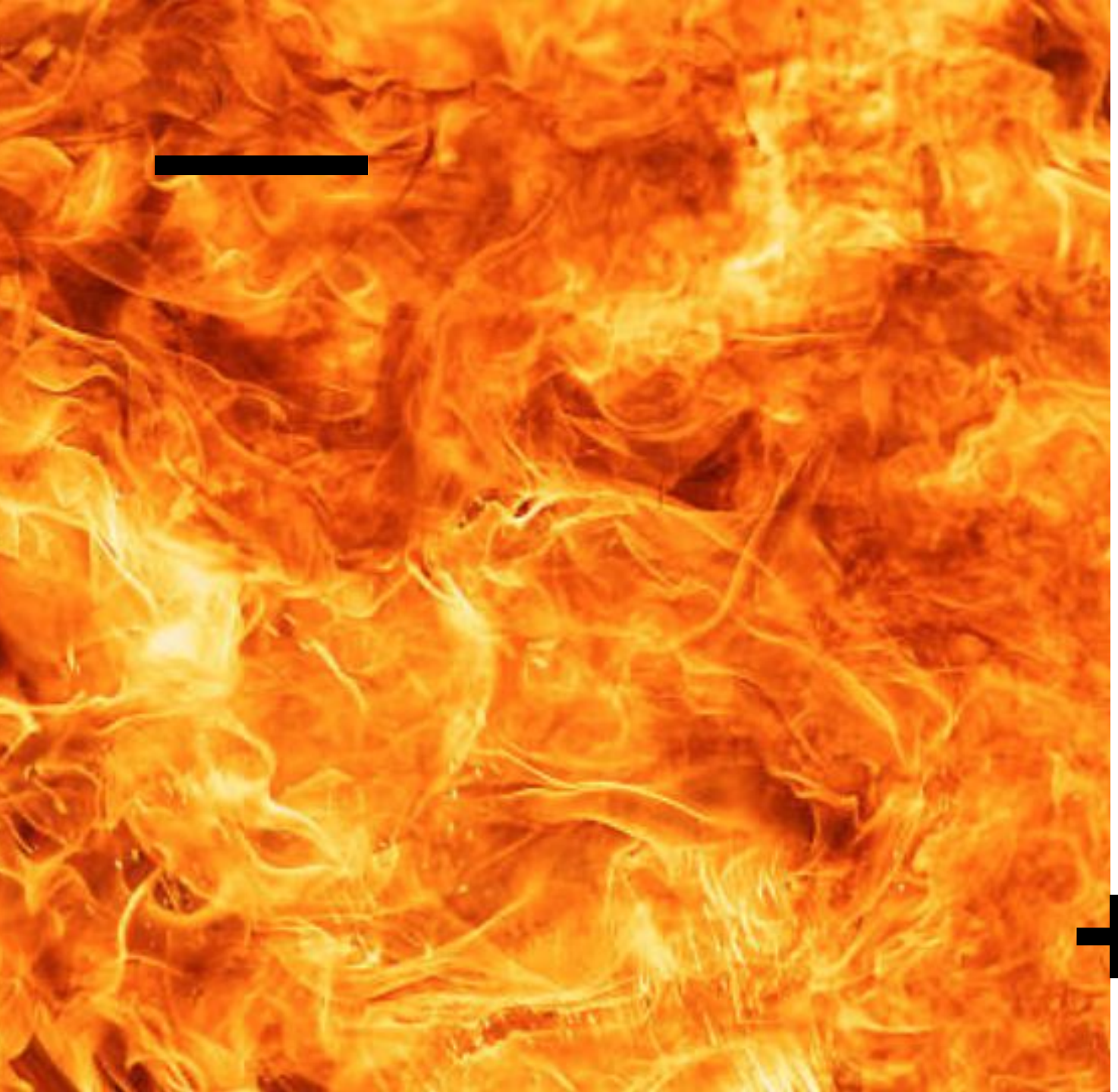


Jaime Mears' List of "Nine Primary Demons"

- **1. The perfectionist/insatiable to do list addict – what we must not forget/control freak. For example, this archetype is** moving against. It's all about passive aggression.
- **2. The attention seeker/needy one. So, you can choose, an overbearing and resentful mother, a flaming sex maniac/ jealous lover archetype. It's all about conditional love! Look how much I love you! but there is a big payment.** This archetype is something about vanity, driven by an insatiable desire for love attention.
- **3. The strategizing mask wearer/entrepreneur/used car salesman. Anything to get to the top/win/make the sale.**
- **4. The melancholic artist, the individualist, The ever suffering, impotent lover**.
- **5. The arrogant know it all, scientist in his turret.**

Jaime Mears' List of "Nine Primary Demons"

- **6. The paranoid or (hypochondriac) The complete pessimist - Imagining the worst that will happen, negative, voice of doom**
- **7. The innocent, naive child, this time it will be different, I can't wait. Lets have fun. The glutton. It's going to be so good when…I cant wait until… etc**
- **8. The tyrant/Vengeance is mine! Kill, revenge, Murder!!!! They've got it coming. Bad drivers. You could go from perfectionist to raging tyrant.**
- **9. The indifferent, detached, the apathetic sleepwalker, chronic fence sitter. Everyone's right…I mean, I can see both sides. It's really bad but…you know, we're here, they're there.**



All Humans Have Shadows

- This list represents parts of ourselves that drive us (consciously/unconsciously).
- We will find that on certain days, or just in tight moments one of these or two take over. And so there is a raging inner life happening that drives all of our outer behavior.

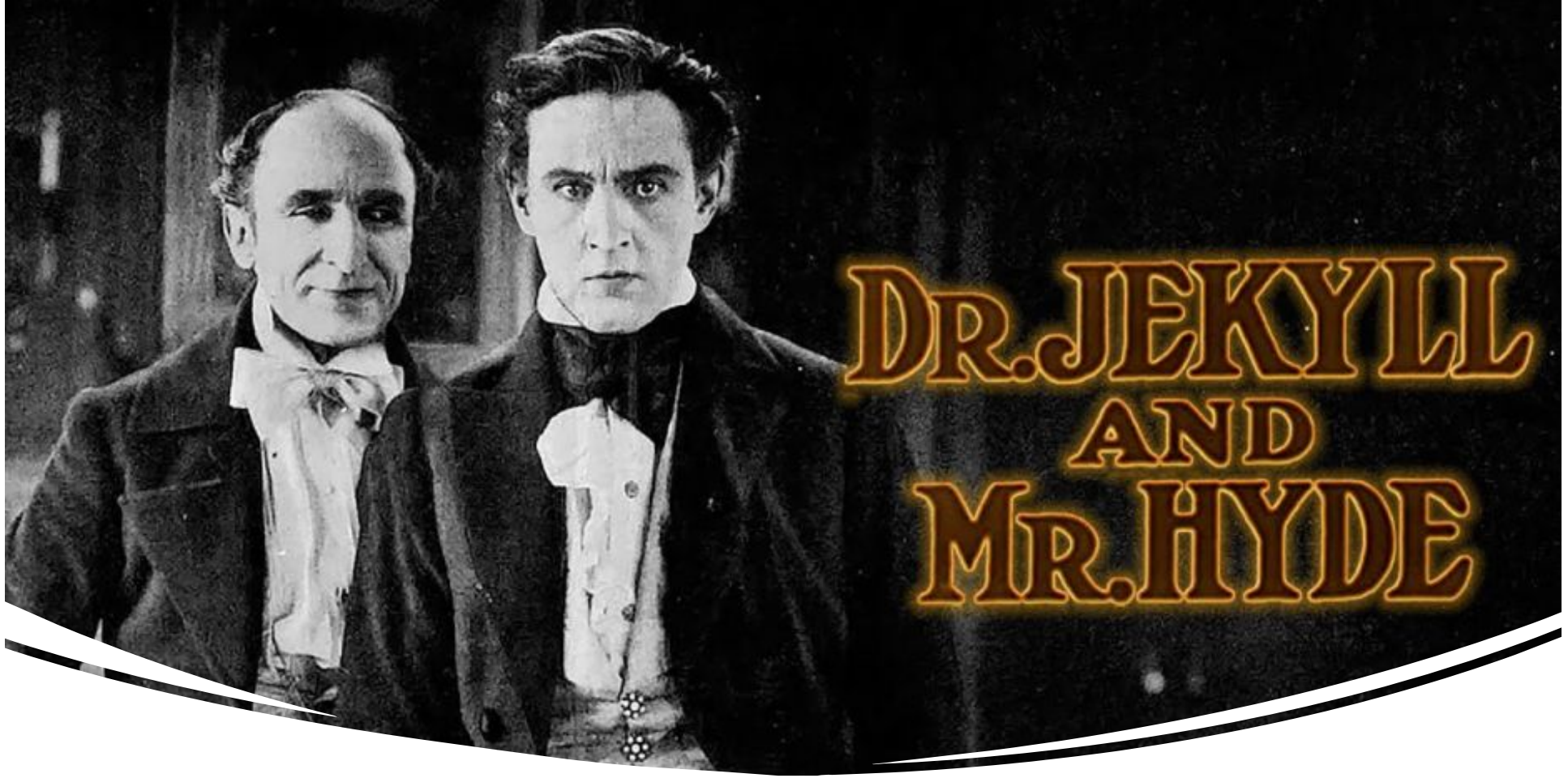


CARL JUNG AND THE SHADOW SELF

- I deeply admire the person who says, “I’m a cranky old sinner, but I try to do my best,” or “I’m a convicted felon who has been locked up in prison for a long time, but I won’t let that stop me from my dream of finishing college, getting a stable job, and starting a family.” They have the humility to know they have a past. They’re not saying, “I’ve got it solved.”
- When I meet someone who identifies themselves as virtuous, that’s when I get most frightened.

Twist of irony?

- To Catch a Predator was an American reality television series produced by Dateline NBC featuring confrontations of host Chris Hansen, partly filmed with a hidden camera, with adult men arriving at a sting house to have sex with a minor and typically being arrested as a result. The minors were adults impersonating underage persons in online chats.
- In a twist of irony, my gut reaction was to be more frightened by the pious and virtuous nature of the host when he confronted the men than of the men themselves.



Carl Jung

- To better understand this idea of the shadow, let's briefly explore the story of Jekyll and Hyde. The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is a novella from 1886 written by Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson.
- The story of Jekyll and Hyde is a great illustration of the ego and the shadow in Jungian psychology.

Carl Jung

- In the book Dr. Jekyll, a large, well-made man battles between the dual internal personalities of good and evil: The good man Henry Jekyll wants himself to be and the evil, impulsive, and cruel Edward Hyde.
- Jekyll knows that the Hyde in him contains urges that are not befitting the man he wants himself to be, and the internal conflict and repression of Hyde feed this darker side until it becomes all-encompassing.

Carl Jung

- Let's begin by exploring both the nature of the person we *want* to be and the nature of our shadow. The shadow is the form taken by the aspects of our nature that we *dislike*, the parts of ourselves we're *ashamed* of, and the primal and impulsive parts that we *hide* from ourselves and those around us.

Carl Jung

– *"Unfortunately there can be no doubt that man is, on the whole, less good than he imagines himself or wants to be. Everyone carries a shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual's conscious life, the blacker and denser it is.* If an inferiority is conscious, one always has a chance to correct it. Furthermore, it is constantly in contact with other interests, so that it is continually subjected to modifications. ***But if it is repressed and isolated from consciousness, it never gets corrected***."

Carl Jung

- Within each of us lies two parts of a whole: the person we want to be and some part of us that conflicts with that ideal version of ourselves.
- Often, the part of us that conflicts with the ideal is the part that has impulsive urges, desires, and things we feel but don’t like.
- The shadow, as described by Carl Jung, is the unconscious part of our character or personality that does not align with the *ideal* version of what we’re aiming for; this is the version of us Jung called the “ego ideal.”

Carl Jung

- This contrast between the ego ideal and the shadow causes us to reject and resist the shadow, and through our rejection of the parts of ourselves we dislike, we unconsciously *project* them onto others. This can be seen easily in our dislike for certain people. Often, the specifics we dislike in others are an *indication of what we dislike in ourselves.*

Carl Jung

– *“The psychological rule says that when an inner situation is not made conscious, it happens outside as fate. That is to say, when the individual remains undivided and does not become conscious of his inner opposite, the world must perforce act out the conflict and be torn into opposing halves.”*

Carl Jung

- An easy way to check the nature of our shadow is to look at others and find out the qualities you like the *least*.
- These are often qualities you dislike in *yourself* and push down or avoid. This is called *projection* and can lead us to have a warped perception of the people around us.
- While we may not like what we see when we begin to look at our shadow, it’s exploration is important for personal development.

Examples

- I have a relative that loves to gloat about his victories in the courtroom and how he tied the witness up into knots. I can’t stand listening to it. A minute of this feels like torture. What does this say about me?
- An acquaintance I know blows things out of proportion and always makes something out of nothing. I despise this. What does this say about me?
- Another acquaintance has miserly tendencies and thrusts himself into the role of a martyr. I abhor this. What does this say about me?

Benefits of the Shadow

- Within its chaos and impulse, the shadow may also contain a number of qualities and potentials that can help round out our character and personality.
- For example, if you believe that being assertive or aggressive makes you a bad person, you may have allowed other people to push your boundaries while you said nothing, not wanting to cause trouble.

Benefits of the Shadow

- However, your shadow may contain a nature that is assertive, a nature that you can feel push back angrily when you are being pushed by others.
- If this is the case, then you can learn to harness this element of your shadow so that when you’re in a position that requires strong boundaries or negotiation, you have the ability to say no and hold your ground.

Benefits of the Shadow

- Other examples could include allowing ourselves to express how we’re feeling if we’ve grown up believing that expressing our feelings is a weakness.
- Our shadow can help us understand others; when we know our own shadow and see hints of it in other people, we can be more compassionate about what they're feeling.
- Whatever the nature of your shadow, knowing it will help you accept it, and accepting it will not only loosen its hold over you; it will also begin to unlock its potential.

Assimilating the Shadow

- How do we take the shadow and connect it with who we are?
- First, we must accept that part of who we are is this mass of undesirable impulse and desire called the shadow. It is part of all of us, and whether we want it to be there or not, it will influence the way we behave and perceive the world around us.
- Second, we must learn its nature. This requires self-reflection. As Jung put it, “*conscientious attention to moods, fantasies, and impulses”.*

Assimilating the Shadow

- This attention can be achieved through meditation, to observe the workings of the mind in the present moment, and through practices like journaling, where you write down your thoughts, moods, fantasies, and desires. Both methods are helpful for learning how your mind works, and both will slowly, over time, allow you to learn the qualities of your shadow.
- Third, and finally, the negotiation. This is the back and forth that we will inevitably have between accepting the shadow and rejecting it and finding out what is useful to us and what is not. This can again be done through meditation, but you will also need to expose the shadow to the world to see which parts feel constructive and which do not.

Assimilating the Shadow

- There are a few techniques that can help us with this journey with our shadow:
- (1) Learning to be consciously aware of how we respond to things and to other people will give us insight into what triggers us, what makes us defensive, and what specific traits in others we tend to dislike. These patterns in our behavior, over time, help us understand the nature of our shadow. So when you feel the urge to instinctively act in response to something or someone, try to catch yourself in the moment and get a feel for why and what you're feeling.

Assimilating the Shadow

- (2) Use the qualities you like about yourself to understand the qualities you *dislike*. If you like being a calm person, look for examples where you've lost your cool and what caused the response. If you like being a kind person, look for areas in your life where you tend to be unkind, cold, or lacking compassion. Look for exceptions to the goodness in you and try to understand why that might be.

Assimilating the Shadow

- (3) Manage your inner dialogue—we all speak to ourselves, whether it's conscious or unconscious. The language we use internally will go some way toward influencing how we react externally. Keep an eye on the language and what is being said; it could lead you to some clarity about the nature of your shadow or the stories you tell yourself to cover up or validate the needs of the shadow.

Assimilating the Shadow

- Finally, there are a few things that can be useful when we're exploring the shadow in ourselves:

1. Self-compassion is our ability to be understanding of ourselves when we find something about our character we don't like. It's important to understand that everyone has a shadow beneath the version of themselves they decide to show the world. Some are more destructive than others, but we all have them to some degree. Don't kick yourself too hard.

Assimilating the Shadow

2. Self-awareness is our ability to understand how we feel and what we're thinking in the moment.

3. Honesty—and our ability to accept what we see in ourselves and see it for what it is, rather than trying to warp it because it may be uncomfortable.

Closing Remarks on the Shadow

- Hopefully you can see the benefit of making the unconscious more conscious and using parts of yourself that you might not want to think about.
- This shadow work can go a long way towards helping us feel less resistance to the world around us as we begin to understand the reason for that resistance and even harness it for our own benefit.

Carl Jung: Screenwriting Guru?

Yes! The more I study Carl Jung, the more I discover his ideas about psychology have a direct relevance to screenwriting (specifically) and stories (generally).



Carl Jung – Screenwriting Guru

- Jung was a huge influence on American writer, Joseph Campbell. And Campbell was an influence on George Lucas when he was making *Star Wars*. Indeed, Luke Skywalker's journey reflects Jung's ideas as detailed in this series. We also see these dynamics in place with Rey's nascent metamorphosis in *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*.
- Not surprising. Jung's philosophy articulates universal dynamics, just as Campbell did with the Hero's Journey.

Carl Jung & “Individuation”

- Here, I’m going to focus on Jung’s notion of *individuation*, the achievement of one’s self-actualization through a process of integrating the conscious and the unconscious.
- This movement toward a state of what Jung called “wholeness” is an enlightening way to think about what many in the screenwriting trade refer to as the *Protagonist Transformation Arc*.

Are we related to the infinite or not?

- Let's begin with this quote from Jung:
- *"The decisive question for man is: Is he related to something infinite or not? That is the telling question of his life. Only if we know that the thing which truly matters is the infinite can we avoid fixing our interests upon futilities, and upon all kinds of goals which are not of real importance. Thus we demand that the world grant us recognition for qualities which we regard as personal possessions: our talent or our beauty. The more a man lays stress on false possessions, and the less sensitivity he has for what is essential, the less satisfying is his life. He feels limited because he has limited aims, and the result is envy and jealousy. If we understand and feel that here in this life we already have a link with the infinite, desires and attitudes change."*

Are we related to the infinite or not?

- If we look at a story from a psychological standpoint, focusing in on the Inner Life of its key characters, particularly the Protagonist, we can see that at its core, the narrative poses an existential question of them: “Who am I?”

Are we related to the infinite or not?

- Joseph Campbell, who was hugely influenced by Jung, put it this way when describing where the Hero finds him/herself at the beginning of a story:
- *“The Hero is making do, but feels something missing, a sense of discomfort or tension. The Hero needs to change, even if they are unaware of that need.”*

Are we related to the infinite or not?

- The Protagonist can continue to live according to their Old Way of Being, beliefs and behaviors, coping skills and defense mechanisms cobbled together in their life leading up to FADE IN. But those are “false possessions… less satisfying” and can only result in “limited aims.”
- Invariably, the Protagonist is “related to something infinite” or to use contemporary psychological jargon, *authentic*, key aspects of their psyche which are largely lying dormant, waiting to be awakened.

Examples

- Whether it's…
- Dorothy Gale in *The Wizard of Oz* determining if her home in Kansas really feels like home…
- Rick Blaine in *Casablanca* persisting in cynicism or reconnecting with his idealistic self…
- Michael Corleone in *The Godfather* accepting his fate as a Mafia don…
- Luke Skywalker in *Star Wars* jettisoning his life as a moisture farmer to become a Jedi knight…

Examples

- Michael Dorsey in *Tootsie* confronting his own sexism and becoming a better man by playing the role of a woman…
- Ripley in *Aliens* resurrecting her maternal instincts…
- Clarice Starling in *The Silence of the Lambs* finding the courage to face her deepest fears and nightmares…
- Andy and Red in *The Shawshank Redemption* deciding whether to get busy living or get busy dying…

Examples

- Simba in *The Lion King* figuring out his true identity as king of the pride…
- Neo in *The Matrix* falling into his destiny as The One…
- Bruce Wayne in *The Dark Knight* attempting to turn away from his life as a superhero vigilante…
- Or Annie in *Bridesmaids* freeing herself from her infantile notions of romance…

Are we related to the infinite or not?

- Virtually all movies deal with that key existential question in relation to the Protagonist: Who are you? And their transformation from FADE IN to FADE OUT is a form of what Jung calls “individuation.”
- “Become the hero of your own journey.” That’s a brief, yet powerful take on Jung’s fundamental idea. And it sums up most Protagonist’s psychological experiences.

Are we related to the infinite or not?

- Is the character related to something “infinite” (authentic) or not? If so, do they elect to move away from their Old Way of Being, embrace that which has been largely ‘unconscious’, and transforming toward wholeness?

Make the unconscious conscious

- Embrace the idea that the unconscious, the stuff of an individual's Authentic Self, naturally seeks to emerge into the light of consciousness. We, as writers, can think of a Protagonist's transformation as a reflection of this dynamic.

Make the unconscious conscious

- We can think of the unconscious like Jung did, the reservoir of material that was once conscious, but has been forgotten or suppressed. As writers, when we consider that “reservoir of material” in our characters, most notably the Protagonist, that is the stuff of their Authentic Nature, True Nature, Core Essence, whatever language you prefer to use.
- What was once conscious in your client which has now receded into the annals of a deep, dark abyss?

Make the unconscious conscious

- Here’s the thing: **It’s already there**. It resides in the character’s inner world. So when Joseph Campbell says of the Hero at the beginning of their adventure when they are dwelling in their Old World, that they “need to change,” this means that the Authentic Nature of the character, which is somehow being ignored, avoided, suppressed, or repressed; that ‘stuff’ needs to move from the unconscious state to the conscious state.

Make the unconscious conscious

- That dynamic is another way of thinking about the Protagonist Transformation Arc, their Core Essence emerging into the light of day, the Protagonist embracing it, and in the context of facing various adversities, growing from Disunity to Unity, or as Jung says toward being a “whole” individual.

Examples

- *Dorothy Gale in* The Wizard of Oz*: She knew all along Kansas was her home, but she had to go on her journey far away in order to grasp that Inner Truth. "There's no place like home. There's no place like home."*
- *Rick Blaine in* Casablanca*: His idealism as manifested by fighting for the loyalists in Spain, suppressed by his cynicism born of a broken heart, reveals itself in the end through his selfless act with Ilsa and Laszlo.*





Example

- *Michael Corleone in* The Godfather*: Sent away by his father in an attempt to shield him from Mafia life, Michael's DNA, his Authentic Nature, compels him to take over the family business.*

Make the unconscious conscious

- As Ovid wrote in Metamorphoses: “The seeds of change lie within.”
- The Protagonist’s Authentic Self is already there. It just needs to grow from beneath the soil into the light of day. As it does, it causes the Protagonist to change. In essence, that is the very nature of a character’s transformation.

Make the unconscious conscious

- However, change isn’t easy. Indeed, for a Protagonist to get in touch with let alone embrace their Core Essence can be a painful process.
- There’s often good reasons why they repress and avoid the stuff of their unconsciousness, most notably aspects of their psyche which have powerful negative associations.

Make the Darkness Conscious

- Recall Joseph Campbell's observation about the starting point of a hero's journey: "They need to change." Their "old way of being" does not only represent an inauthentic existence, but it's also a system which actively *represses* the character's shadow. The Protagonist cannot move toward Unity and Wholeness without confronting their Shadow.



Carl Jung

- But that can be a dangerous proposition: “It is a frightening thought that man also has a shadow side to him, consisting not just of little weaknesses- and foibles, but of a *positively demonic dynamism*. The individual seldom knows anything of this; to him, as an individual, it is incredible that he should ever in any circumstances go beyond himself. But let these harmless creatures form a mass, and there *emerges a raging monster*; and each individual is only one tiny cell in the monster’s body, so that for better or worse he must accompany it on its *bloody rampages* and even assist it to the utmost. Having a dark suspicion of these grim possibilities, man turns a blind eye to the shadow-side of human nature.”

Make the Darkness Conscious

- *Positively demonic dynamism… emerges a raging monster*… *bloody rampages*. This inner tension is rife with psychological danger. But as storytellers, we can raise the stakes: What if we project these attributes into the External World as a character: The Nemesis?
- Now we create a specific psychological connection between the Protagonist and antagonist figure, taking that internal struggle and visualizing it in the physical world. Think Batman-Joker.



Make the Darkness Conscious

- This is a powerful way we can take this inner dynamic suggested by Jung — “Make the darkness conscious” — and turn it into cinematic drama.
- *Luke Skywalker in* Star Wars*: Luke confronts his own pull toward the Dark Side of the Force in the form of Darth Vader.*
- *Clarice Starling in* The Silence of the Lambs*: Straddled with an infantile sense of guilt over her father’s senseless murder, Clarice confronts Buffalo Bill, a symbolic version of the men who killed her father.*

Make the Darkness Conscious

- How interesting when we work with a Protagonist to think about their initial state of Disunity, that underneath whatever veneer they are presenting to the world, there is this roiling set of psychological dynamics, bursting at the seams to move from the darkness into the light.
- And a major part of the psychological struggle for the character is dealing with the fear of confronting their *own* Shadow.

Make the Darkness Conscious

- For me, this Disunity state is a richer way to think of the Protagonist's beginning state of being than the frequent advice: "Give your Protagonist a flaw."

Psychological Rule as “Fate”

- Now we can crack open one of the most important ideas Jung has when it comes to storytelling:
- *“The psychological rule says that when an inner situation is not made conscious, it happens outside as fate. That is to say, when the individual remains undivided and does not become conscious of his inner opposite, the world must perforce act out the conflict.”*

Psychological Rule as “Fate”

- When I first read this, I was stunned because I was immediately struck by how apt a description this is of the Protagonist’s journey. As per Campbell, when the Hero begins a story, they are “just making do.” However, the unconscious presses to become conscious. From a writing perspective, we can look at that as the Protagonist’s Authentic Nature which has a natural propensity to break through the Old Way of Being and transform the Protagonist into their True Self. If the Protagonist does not deal with their starting state of Disunity… the Story Universe compels them into action.

Psychological Rule as “Fate”

- What is the first jolt to the Protagonist’s psyche? The Call To Adventure. The Inciting Incident. Whatever we call it, there is a synergy between the Protagonist’s Inner World and the External World of the plot.
- Looked at this way, we can think of the events which transpire in the plot as supporting the Protagonist’s change. After all, Joseph Campbell said the whole point of the Hero’s Journey is “transformation.”

Psychological Rule as “Fate”

- This assertion by Jung may be the single most important idea when it comes to writing stories which embrace an active interplay between a character’s Internal and External Worlds. The events which transpire, what we as storytellers call Plot Points, are not arbitrary, rather they provoke and incite the Protagonist to change. What we call Sequences are in effect a reflection of the Protagonist’s transformation, stage by stage.

Psychological Rule as “Fate”

- An event happens.
  The character reflects on the Event.
  The character responds.
- Another event happens.
  The character reflects on it.
  The character responds.
- And on and on, each test or challenge in the Plot compelling the Protagonist to change, indeed, steering the very arc of their transformation.

Examples

- Andy in *The Shawshank Redemption*: Forced into imprisonment, it's there Andy rediscovers his own humanity through his selfless acts toward others.
- Red in *The Shawshank Redemption*: Pulled toward cynicism by the soul-sucking effect of 'institutionalization,' Red's intersection with Andy fans Red's flickering embers of hope, leading him to choose to 'get busy living'.

Examples

- Simba in *The Lion King*: Leaving home in self-imposed exile is Simba's fate, the only way he can move from an infantile notion of what it means to be king to get in touch with and embrace his True Nature as King.
- Bruce Wayne in *The Dark Knight*: The Joker upends Wayne's attempts to extract himself from his superhero responsibilities, only in the end to become a true, yet unknown hero by saving the legacy of Harvey Dent.

Psychological Rule as “Fate”

- The shift which occurs from Disunity to Unity state, which is the most common arc in movies, or any other trajectory (Unity to Disunity, Disunity to Unity Rejected, etc) does, indeed, act like Fate, what I call the *Narrative Imperative*.
- It’s not arbitrary. Instead, it is grounded in the very nature of the Protagonist — “The seeds of change lie within” — and plays out in a synergistic relationship between Plot and Character.

Become Who You Truly Are

- The final quote from Jung has a huge impact on storytelling:
- *“Become who you are. Become all that you are. There is still more of you — more to be discovered, forgiven, and loved.”*

Become Who You Truly Are

- If we transplant this idea into the realm of crafting a story, this concept quite sums up the arc — at least if the trajectory is a *positive* one — of the Protagonist's transformation journey.
- Joseph Campbell says, "The hero has to change."
- Ovid says, "The seeds of change lie within."
- Carl Jung says: "The privilege of a lifetime is to become who you truly are."

Examples

- Neo in *The Matrix*: He becomes who he truly is: The One.
- Annie in *Bridesmaids*: She becomes who she truly is: An imperfect woman capable of accepting herself and an imperfect man as people worthy of romance and love.

Become Who You Truly Are

- The stuff of the Authentic Self is already there. It is being repressed, suppressed, ignored, or avoided. That is the psychological basis of the Protagonist's beginning state of Disunity.
- The Story Universe creates events (Plotline Points) which compel the Protagonist onto, into, and through their adventure.

Become Who You Truly Are

- The events not only advance the plot, but they also serve as tests and challenges which force the Protagonist to change, even to confront their shadow self as exhibited in opposition figures and dynamics including Nemesis figures.

Become Who You Truly Are

- Along the way, they discover their Old Way of Being is inauthentic and thus has restricted their growth. As those beliefs and behaviors, coping skills and defense mechanisms are Deconstructed, this leads to a process of Reconstruction in which the Protagonist evolves into New Ways of Being, and their True Self emerges.

Become Who You Truly Are

- This is why in most movies, we see a Protagonist who survives the Final Struggle by embracing all they have learned and using the ‘stuff’ of their Authentic Nature to win the day, and in doing so move toward a state of Unity.
- If you want to know what the primary emotional point of the story is, it’s that: To show the Protagonist as a whole being.

Become Who You Truly Are

- When we see the Protagonist persevere and make it through their challenging journey, not only ending up in a better place, but one in which they have become who they truly are… it makes us feel happy. And we all know how Hollywood loves happy endings.

Become Who You Truly Are

- One caveat: While most Hollywood movies feature a Protagonist going through a positive metamorphosis, that’s not always true. Sometimes they go through a negative one. Sometimes they refuse to change. Sometimes the Protagonist doesn’t change, but acts as a change agent with others.

Summary

- But it is almost inevitable that transformation is at work in a story. What Jung articulates in his take on analytical psychology is directly relatable to screenwriting and storytelling in general.



Relating this to a real case in which I made the defendant the Protagonist

Themes:

“Love conquers all.”

“Never underestimate the power of love.”

“Chivalry isn’t dead.”



Beware!

- The jury is always watching. Their tentacles are always out feeling and probing, sending signals to the brain just as when we meet someone for the first time. This happens instantaneously and involuntarily, just like breathing itself.

Mirror Neurons in Hypo Drive

- As human beings, we're constantly trying to assess the tone and get the "temperature" of a room. In other words, to evaluate others. It's a survival mechanism and it happens subconsciously. You do it with your friends and your partner. Our mirror neurons are always looking for cues and firing away.
- Similarly, the audiences' brains are looking for cues. If you want the audience to say, "What's going on?" you must be specific.

Some Storytelling Tips

- Unleash the Power of Cognitive Biases: Cognitive biases are mental shortcuts that shape how we perceive and process information. Understanding these biases allows you to speak directly to the way your audience thinks.
- For example, the availability bias suggests that information readily recalled is perceived as *more* likely. Use vivid stories, statistics, and relatable examples to make your message seem more probable and impactful.

Some Storytelling Tips

- Beyond Words – Tapping into Instincts: Effective communication isn't about complex legalese or flowery language. Ease the legalese and instead, align your message with how the jurors’ brains naturally process information.

Some Storytelling Tips

– Craft messages that are:
  - Memorable: Use storytelling, vivid imagery, and relatable examples to make your message stick.
  - Emotionally Stimulating: Appealing to emotions like *hope*, *fear*, or *excitement* can grab attention and influence behavior.
  - Aligned with Evolutionary Instincts: Tapping into fundamental human needs for *safety*, *belonging*, and *recognition* can make your message more persuasive. In this way, it's like raising a seemingly innocuous legal issue to the level of constitutional magnitude in order to get the judge's attention.

Some Storytelling Tips

- The Power of Questions: Asking questions engages your jury and makes them part of the conversation.
- The Rule of Three: Information presented in threes is easier to remember and recall.
- Storytelling: Stories connect with us emotionally and make information more relatable.

Some Storytelling Tips

- The Contrast Effect: Highlighting Value Through Comparison: Things appear more significant when compared to something different.
- “It was the best of times. It was the worst of times.”

Some Storytelling Tips

- “Don’t send your hand to do the work of your soul.” You don’t have to show you’re feeling something by gesturing or indicating it. Less is more. Trust that you are enough.



Silencing the Inner Critic

Non-judgmental Mind

Free yourself from the habits of judging yourself & judging others.

Try not to compare yourself to others.

Slow down that racing mind & those anxious thoughts by parking your thoughts on the side of the road like you would a car and coming back to them later. All the worrying in the world will not change the past and the future is off in the distance.

PERFECTIONISM

- When was the last time you said after watching a spell-binding performance of an actor that captivated you: “That actor was *perfect*.” Probably never. Why? It isn’t entertaining to watch a person being perfect.
- It’s more entertaining to watch a person act in a way that flaunts society’s conventions. Because we would never dare do something like them, we get a thrill out of living vicariously through them. That’s why we are drawn to watching a character who must struggle to overcome insurmountable odds (i.e., not an ordinary day in their life, but their “worst” day) or the story behind how an otherwise “average” person unravels into a mentally unstable person (i.e, “Joker”) than we are a character who is simply performing mundane tasks on a day no different than any other. The latter is dull, uninteresting, and boring.

PERFECTIONISM

– “If milk gets bad, it becomes yogurt. Yogurt is more valuable than milk. If it gets even worse, it turns to cheese. Cheese is more valuable than yogurt. And if grape juice turns sour, it transforms into wine, which is even more expensive than grape juice. You are not bad because you made mistakes. Mistakes are the experiences that make you more valuable as a person. Christopher Columbus made a navigational error that made him discover America. Alexander Fleming’s mistake led him to invent Penicillin. Don’t let your mistakes get you down. It is not practice that makes perfect. It is mistakes we learn from that makes us perfect.”

PERFECTIONISM

– To be human is to be messy.

HELPFUL PRACTICES FOR NON-JUDGMENTAL MIND

– Meditation

– Yoga

– Somatic practices (Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais)

– Creative practices (storytelling, improvisation)

FAILURE

- We hate failure. But only through failure, do we get closer to success. It’s counterintuitive. We must know what something isn’t before we can know what something is. In order to learn how to walk, we had to fall. We would never have learned how to walk if we didn’t fall over a hundred times.
- For the same reason, this is why antithesis is such a powerful tool of rhetoric for the courtroom. The good writers knew this. ”It was the best of times. It was the worst of times.” “Not with a bang but with a whimper.” “To be or not to be.” You get the idea.
- For example, let’s say you want to be funny. Chances are those things that you think will make you funny & that other people will laugh at will bomb. In ”flopping,” you might inevitably find what does make you funny. And it’s often times the thing that you’d least expect.

EXERCISES

- Therefore, we need to develop a healthy relationship with failure. Otherwise, we'll never be able to taste the sweet smell of success. But if you're anything like me, you despise failure.
- In order to make good bedfellows with "failure," my acting instructor would say that he had many a student that had failed at some point or another during their journey, but no deaths along the way. My instructor would challenge us to do things which were virtually impossible & which had failure written all over them. However, we were instructed to do them to the best of our ability.

EXAMPLES

– For example, we would be challenged to make the sound of a Soviet-era washing machine running with an over-sized load of laundry inside it; a cheesy game-show host; a car speeding through an intersection just as the light was turning red and colliding head-on with a tractor-trailer during a rain storm; the sound of a horse “hee-heeing;” two pigs mating; a fascist dictator saying grace at the family dinner table; your most ridiculous relative bragging about his most recent accomplishment at Thanksgiving dinner; making a bird-mating call; or a Botoxed morning TV anchor showing off new cake pans. What you discover will surprise you!

THE JURY

– A shocking statistic teaches us that for many people, jury duty marks the first time in their life since they were infants that they have been separated from their smart phones for such an extended period of time. Some may welcome the “digital detox.” Others will become rebellious and in order to satiate the racing mind that is programmed for continuous stimulus, they will quickly substitute “daydreaming” for scrolling through social media feeds. Thus, while they might physically be present, mentally they have checked out and are lying on a beach in the Caribbean sipping a martini. We, of course, have the power to change all of that.

THE JURY

- Early in my career, I felt intimidated by the jury. Because I was representing a person who was accused of committing a crime, I thought that they automatically would despise me and view me as a “snake oil salesman.” I felt their eyes piercing right through me like the look that my dad would give me when I brought home a bad report card.

THE JURY

- Over time, I realized that nothing could be farther from the truth. Put yourself in the shoes of the jury. Consider this. Before you get up to address the jury, do you think that they are saying to themselves, “I hope this lawyer is dull, boring, & uninteresting and falls flat on his face because I have nothing better to do for the next six hours than to be lulled to sleep.”

THE JURY

- No. They are desperate for you to be charming & captivating. They are a captive audience for the next six hours and cannot “escape” by walking out of the courtroom when they get bored or “withdrawing” into the digital world of social media or other apps on their smart phones. You are their only “entertainment” in a world where attention spans are less then ten seconds.
- Therefore, the jury is ”rooting” for you just as an audience who has taken their seats in a theater to see a play are rooting for the actors to take them on a journey into another world and to “help them forget about life for a while.”

THE JURY

- Recognizing this, I have lost whatever fears I once had of the jury and do everything within my power to keep them captivated. Storytelling is an amazing tool for this. My motto is, “Every second is a chance to tell a story.”
- I acknowledge the jurors, make eye contact with them in a friendly but not awkward way, empower them (i.e., telling them they are the most important people in the courtroom), and view them as my “friends” as opposed to enemy combatants. And this is not lost on them!

STATUS IN THE COURTROOM

- The reason I’m a staunch advocate for “empowering the jury” is due to what I call the “status dynamic” of the courtroom. It is not unlike that of a company cocktail party.
- From the moment a jury arrives in the courtroom, they become cognizant of this dynamic. They realize that the judge has the “highest status” while Johnny, the defendant, has the lowest status. The lawyers are usually somewhere in the middle. This is why humanizing Johnny is so important.

STATUS IN THE COURTROOM

– But the perception that the jury has of themselves is what often-times gets overlooked. Despite the fact that they are the most important people in the courtroom insomuch as they are the judges of the facts and will determine the ultimate question of guilt or innocence, most jurors see themselves as being at the bottom of the food chain vis-à-vis everyone else in the courtroom.

STATUS IN THE COURTROOM

– In order to change that, we must empower them and bolster them by reminding them how important they are. Thanking them is not enough and might even be misinterpreted as pandering. This has the added benefit of generating goodwill, especially if your adversary doesn’t do it.

THE CONFESSION OF FEAR

– A mighty powerful tool in the courtroom.

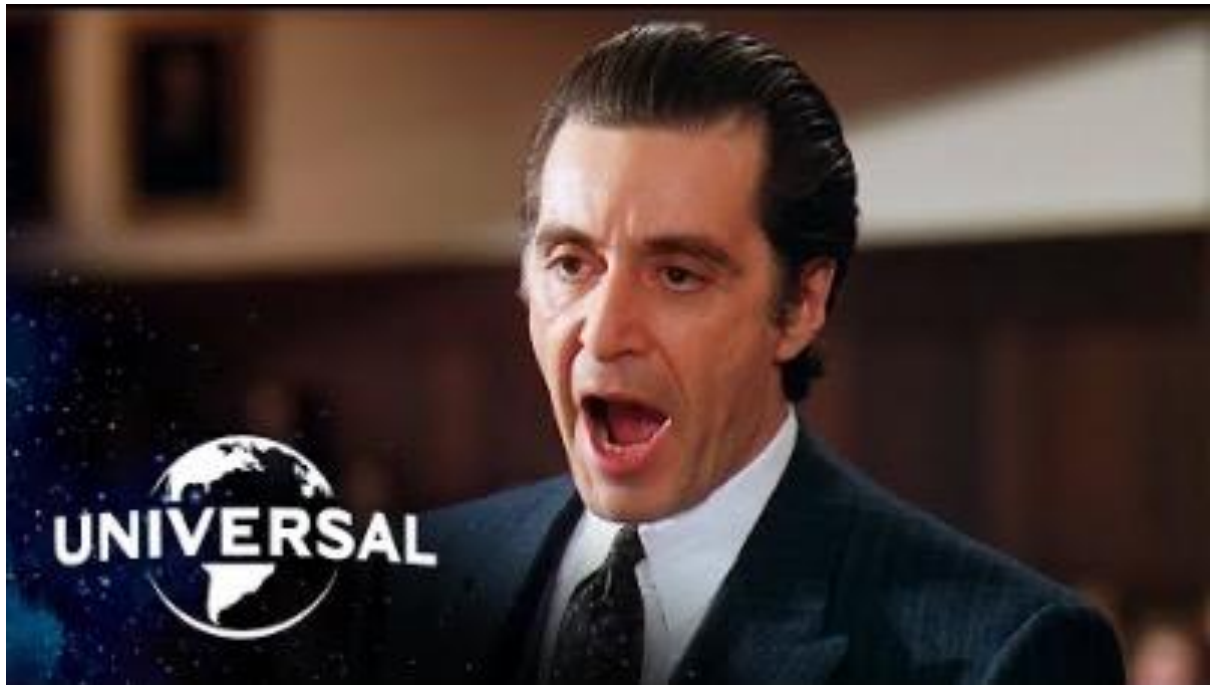
Ending on a positive note

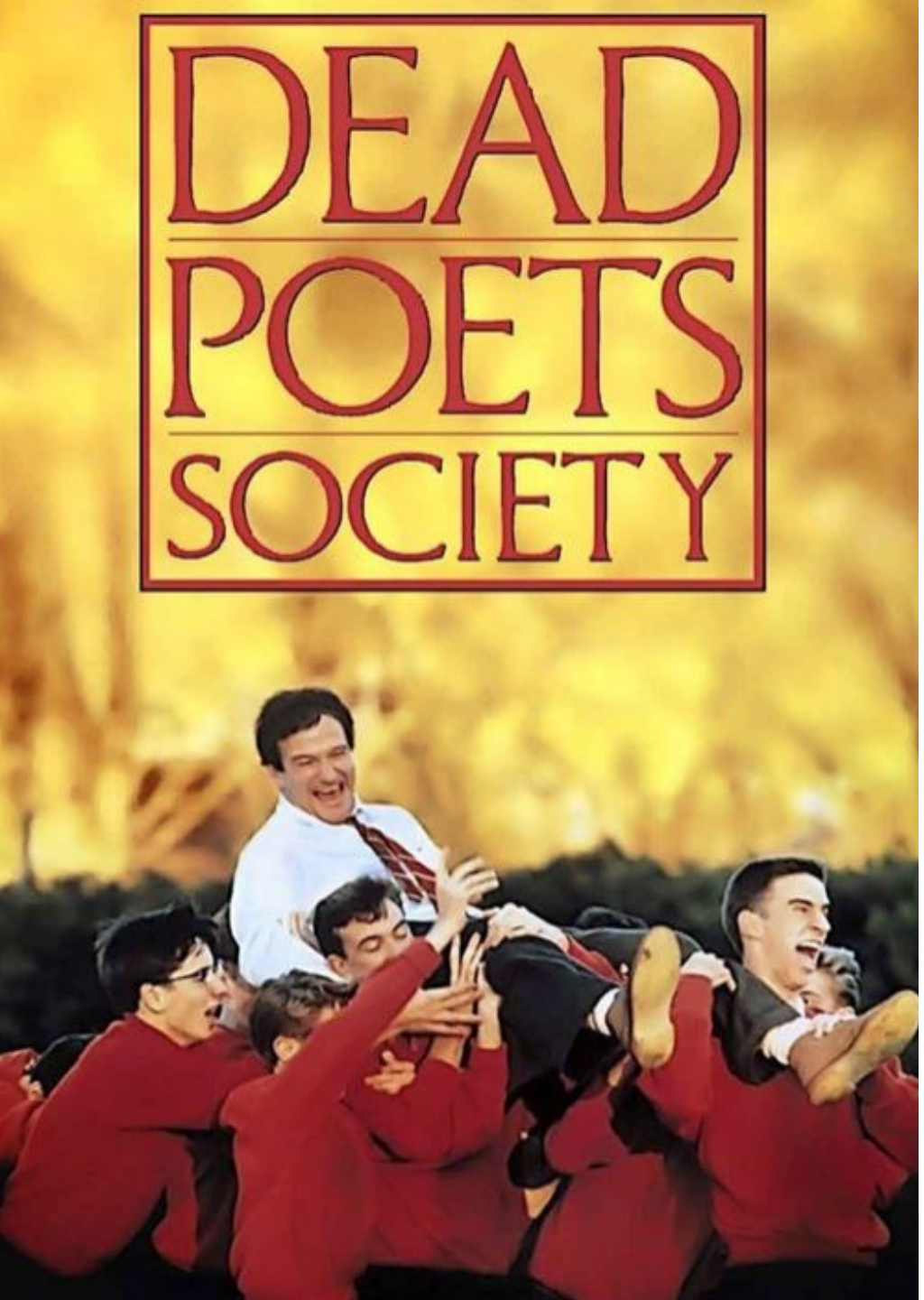
- Since this was a heavy topic, I’d like to end on a positive note.



“Scent of a Woman”

–Charlie refuses to inform, so Trask recommends his expulsion. Frank changes his previous position and gives a passionate speech defending Charlie: he reveals the bribe attempt and urges the committee to value Charlie's *integrity*. The disciplinary committee denies George recognition for naming the perpetrators, places them on probation, and excuses Charlie from the proceedings.





10 lessons we can learn from the movie "Dead Poets Society"

– "Dead Poets Society" is a powerful film that explores themes of individuality, self-discovery, and the pursuit of passion. Set in an all-boys preparatory school in the 1950s, the movie, directed by Peter Weir and starring Robin Williams, has left a lasting impact on audiences. Here are some of the key lessons from the film:



10 lessons we can learn from the movie "Dead Poets Society"

- 1. Encouragement of Individuality: The film emphasizes the importance of embracing one's individuality and unique voice. It encourages individuals to express themselves authentically, pursue their passions, and think independently, rather than conforming to societal norms or expectations.

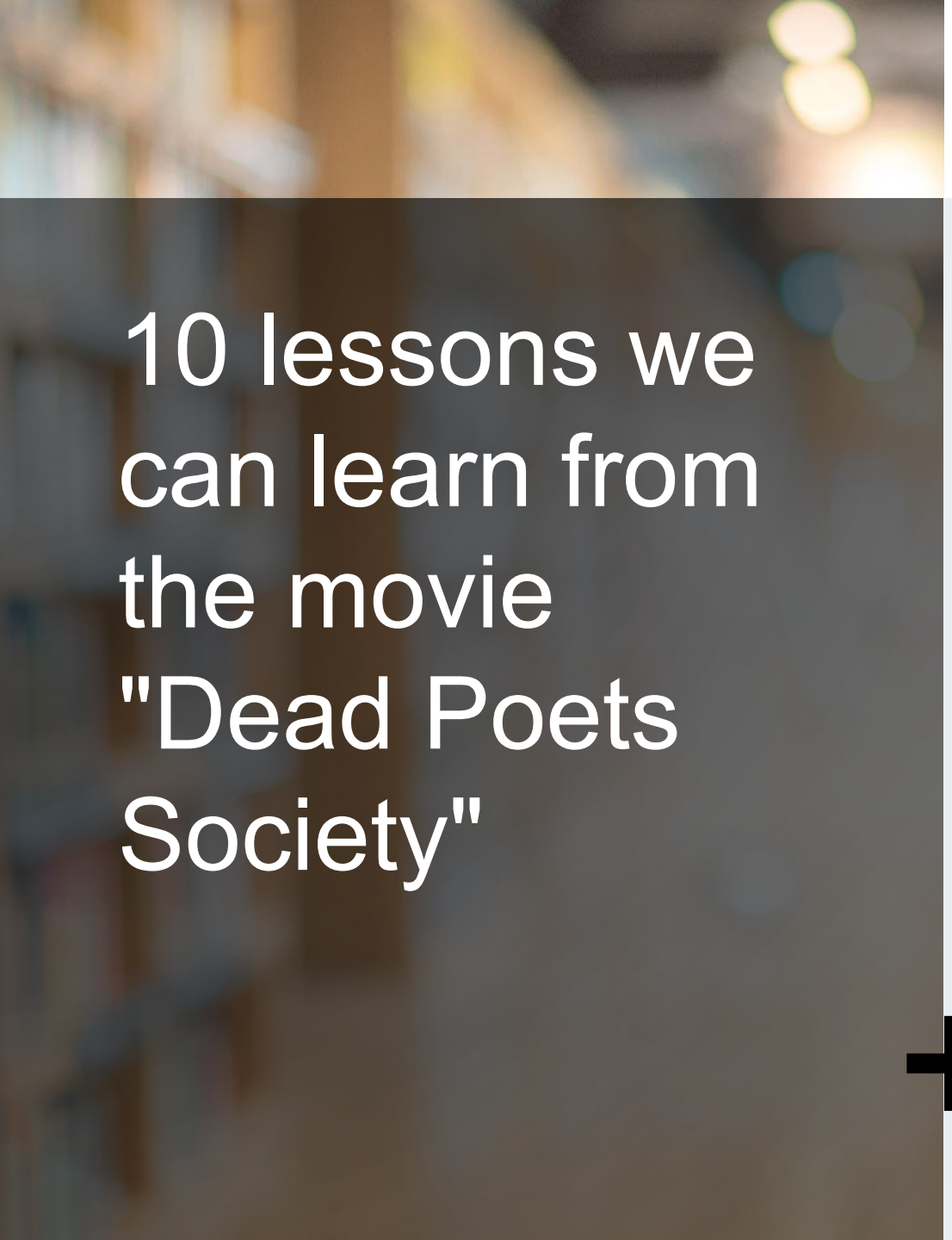


10 lessons we can learn from the movie "Dead Poets Society"

- 2. Inspiration Through Passion and Creativity: "Dead Poets Society" inspires viewers to pursue their passions and engage in creative endeavors. It highlights the transformative power of literature, poetry, and the arts in fostering self-expression, critical thinking, and emotional catharsis. We need more of this today than ever.

10 lessons we can learn from the movie "Dead Poets Society"

- 3. Challenging Conventional Education: The movie critiques the limitations of a rigid, traditional educational system that suppresses creativity and critical thinking. It encourages students and educators alike to challenge the status quo and seek alternative approaches to learning that foster personal growth and intellectual exploration.



10 lessons we can learn from the movie "Dead Poets Society"

- 4. Fostering Critical Thinking and Self-Expression: "Dead Poets Society" underscores the importance of fostering critical thinking skills and encouraging self-expression. It advocates for a holistic approach to education that prioritizes intellectual curiosity, open-mindedness, and the development of a strong moral compass.



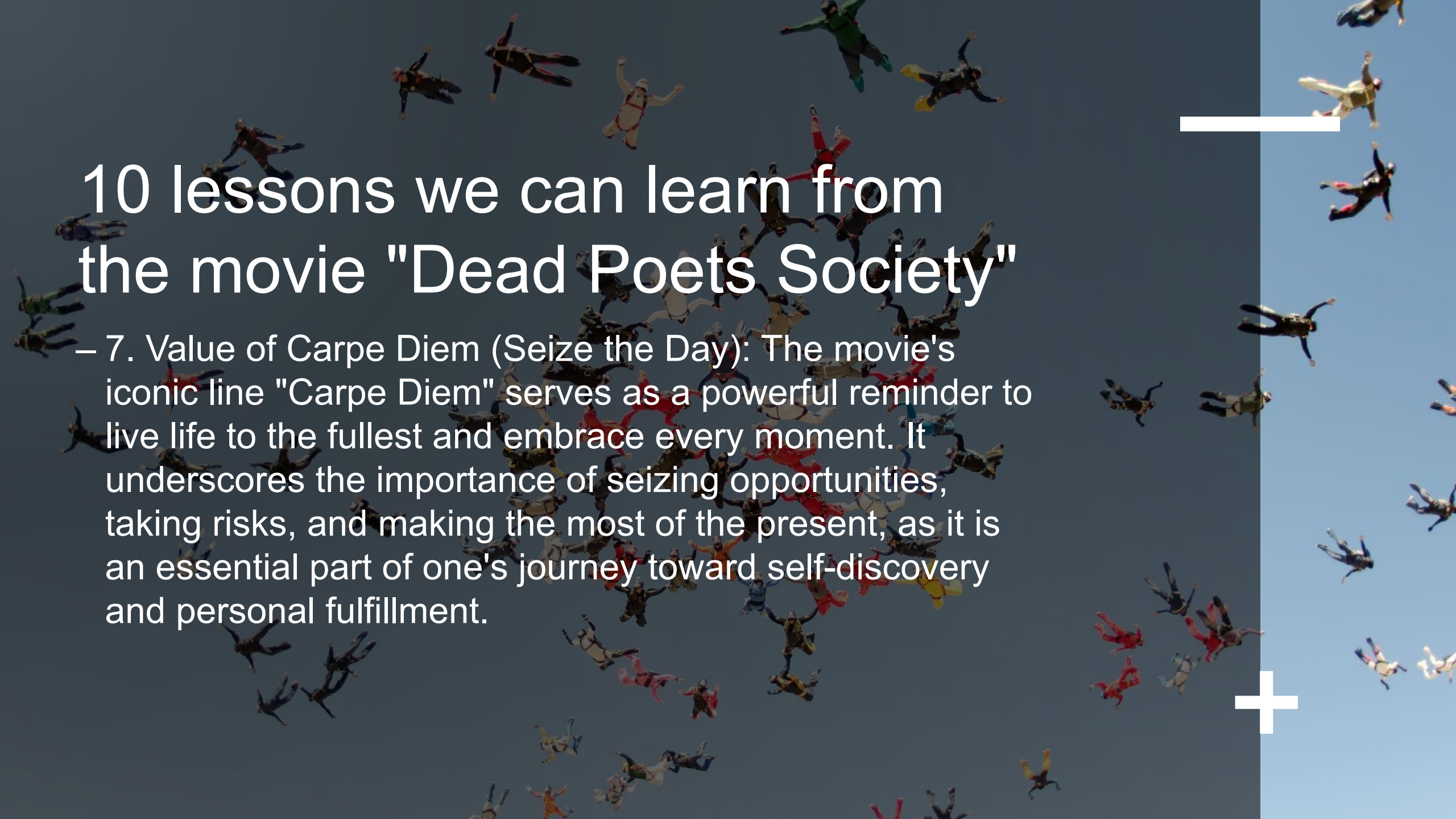
10 lessons we can learn from the movie "Dead Poets Society"

– 5. Embracing Nonconformity and Taking Risks: The film encourages individuals to embrace nonconformity and take risks in the pursuit of their dreams. It celebrates the courage to challenge societal norms, push boundaries, and strive for personal fulfillment, even in the face of adversity or disapproval from others.



10 lessons we can learn from the movie "Dead Poets Society"

– 6. Importance of Mentorship and Support: "Dead Poets Society" highlights the transformative impact of mentorship and support from influential figures. It emphasizes the role of educators in fostering an environment of trust, respect, and encouragement, empowering students to discover their true potential and pursue their aspirations with confidence and determination.



10 lessons we can learn from the movie "Dead Poets Society"

– 7. Value of Carpe Diem (Seize the Day): The movie's iconic line "Carpe Diem" serves as a powerful reminder to live life to the fullest and embrace every moment. It underscores the importance of seizing opportunities, taking risks, and making the most of the present, as it is an essential part of one's journey toward self-discovery and personal fulfillment.

10 lessons we can learn from the movie "Dead Poets Society"

– 8. Impact of Unconventional Teaching Methods: "Dead Poets Society" highlights the positive impact of unconventional teaching methods that prioritize experiential learning, critical thinking, and emotional engagement. It underscores the importance of fostering a dynamic and interactive learning environment that encourages students to question, reflect, and develop a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them.



10 lessons we can learn from the movie "Dead Poets Society"

- 9. Exploration of Identity and Self-Discovery: The film delves into the themes of identity and self-discovery, encouraging individuals to explore their passions, values, and beliefs. It advocates for a journey of self-exploration that enables individuals to develop a strong sense of identity, purpose, and empathy for others.



10 lessons we can learn from the movie "Dead Poets Society"

- 10. Resilience in the Face of Adversity: "Dead Poets Society" highlights the importance of resilience in the face of adversity and challenges. It encourages individuals to persevere through difficult circumstances, maintain their integrity, and stay true to their values and convictions, even when confronted with opposition or societal pressure.

10 lessons we can learn from the movie "Dead Poets Society"

– These lessons from "Dead Poets Society" resonate with audiences, inspiring them to embrace their individuality, pursue their passions, and live life with a sense of purpose and authenticity.