

Goddess Inspiration

Are you so busy doing, doing, doing that suddenly the hour, day, month, year is gone and everything seems like a blur? Have you ever asked, "Why am I here? There's got to be more to life than this."

I asked those questions. In the hopes of finding some answers, I read books, took classes, meditated, and even became certified in several healing modalities. No matter what I did, something was missing! Some piece in the puzzle of life alluded me. I felt, whatever that missing piece was, it would pull everything together, showing me the entire picture. In the midst of my confusion, I met Monica Garaycochea, the creator, founder and teacher of Goddess Inspiration, a workshop devoted to support women to discover their true self.

I asked Monica, "How did you start your journey?" Monica took a breath and started, "It began about fifteen years ago, in Spain, my native country. I was a medical doctor with a successful clinic. I was married to a successful man, had a nice home, a beautiful healthy baby boy, and was well respected in the community. From the "outside" all appeared happy, but the truth was, something was missing "inside". I was deeply unsatisfied. I tried to stay busy by doing, doing, doing, attending to my clinic, my home, baby, husband, friends, but no amount of doing or distractions could keep my world from unraveling. My family and intimate relationship were extremely important to me and these were the first to unravel. My intimate relationship became absolutely painful. I felt like an injured animal, trapped without an escape, alone and vulnerable. To survive, I responded the only way I knew how; I blamed the outside and kept creating more upsets and arguments which led to serious problems.

When I look back on this time in my life, I realize I was absolutely empty. I had nothing "real" to give. I tried to cover my emptiness by being demanding. It was hell for me, as well as everybody close to me.

This time in my life sadly ended in divorce. However, through the pain of divorce, I felt compelled to look inside myself. Gratefully, I found the courage and the support to face my life and myself. This is when I jumped on my own personal labyrinth to heal and forgive my wounds." Monica took a quiet, reflective moment before continuing. "During this time I discovered many things about myself. The most important discovery being, that I realized I did not know or honor my femininity. What did "being feminine," mean to me? That was a HUGE question. Honestly for me, being feminine meant I was a second class human being, irrational, emotional, uncomfortable, manipulative, seductive and painful. Therefore, I denied my femininity. To fit in and be comfortable in this world, I developed my mind and became very intelligent, capable, practical, rational, successful...

Then one day, during a quiet moment, my heart presented these questions. Why did God create both women and men? Why am I a woman? And, what does that mean to me? Today I realize these questions ultimately connected me with my passion for life. Once I accepted that my physical body was not an accident, being in a feminine body became a sacred and divine gift. This beautiful path led me to acknowledge the divine Goddess within - a gift that is within every woman."

I asked Monica, "Can I also experience my inner Goddess?" Without hesitation, Monica replied enthusiastically, "Yes!"

Immediately I asked, "HOW?!" Monica laughed and said, "The first step is to acknowledge and celebrate the wonder of the feminine body. Have you ever thought about the difference between male and female bodies? The male reproductive organs are very simply on the outside, they are highly visible which relates to the outside. For me, that gives me the understanding of masculine energy as being more outside oriented, more action oriented and more goal oriented. By contrast the female reproductive organs are internal, indicating energy that is more invisible, more inside oriented, more mysterious. The wisdom we can experience by honoring and feeling our womb is very powerful. From our womb, we can "comprehend," even "embrace," the wisdom of conception, pregnancy and delivery of creation. I am not referring to only babies, although having a baby was the biggest miracle I have ever experienced in my life, but I'm talking about any kind of creation: a project, desire, idea, etc.. When we become aware of that inner wisdom, we can more easily embrace the cycle of life: birth and death, night and day, new moon and full moon, light and darkness... To have this understanding, coming from deeply inside, means life is an experience and each moment is magic. You'll no longer be afraid to live but will feel your connection with the force of LIFE and naturally experience the flow of LIFE."

I was confused and asked Monica to explain what she meant by using your womb to experience life. Monica realized this was a new concept for me, so she gently and lovingly continued. "This is not something that can be logically explained to you. It can only be experienced, however, I will do my best to give you an idea.

I see the feminine body as a divine tool of communication that helps us learn the lessons of this physical world. This gift is wrapped in the form of a beautiful feminine body and has the ability to awaken the Universal Spirit in and through us, allowing women to experience and expand their divinity and sacredness in a concrete way. What a concept! As we become more aware and intimate with our body, we'll learn a new language. This new language is the essence of femininity, it will be awakened and developed during the Goddess Inspiration workshops using various playful methods

such as dance, visualizations, body expression exercises and ceremonies. I see the feminine organs as representing the Universal Womb where all creation begins. Our womb and the miracle of the menstrual cycle allow women to experience a level of receptiveness that goes beyond mental thoughts because it's magic, it's unpredictable, it's patient, it's peaceful, it's quiet, it's unconditional and absolutely pure potential."

I was curious and wanted to know more. "What is your vision for Goddess Inspiration?" Monica said, "My vision for Goddess Inspiration is to encourage all women on earth to recognize and honor their sacredness and experience their divinity. The picture by Sir Edward Burnes-Jones, "The Mirror of Venus" (on the front page), exemplifies my vision for the workshop. The workshop is for women only and provides an opportunity to look at our true, inner self with the safety of sisterhood of other women."

I was intrigued! So, I asked Monica to tell me more about the philosophy of Goddess Inspiration. Monica explained, "Goddess Inspiration provides the opportunity to heal the wounds created by the belief that our spirituality, our divinity is separate from our matter, our body, our physical world. It is NOT separate! Doubting your direct connection to "DIVINITY" prevents you from truly knowing and feeling love because this perception of separateness will be perpetuated in your world. With this idea of separation, we can not find peace. We might be afraid, fight, judge each other, or compete. We can relate to the world from our sacredness and divinity or from fear, judgment and thoughts of separation. The choice is ours! However, if we have the courage to find our roots in this physical body and understand how this physical world works, there is an opportunity to enlighten ourselves, which will support the enlightenment of the world.

Through Goddess Inspiration we can realize everyone enjoys the benefits of both masculine and feminine aspects in their BEING-ness. Goddess Inspiration acknowledges both of these aspects, but concentrates on the feminine. The masculine virtues are well developed while the feminine virtues need to be re-awakened and developed so we can create more of a balance or harmony within our personality. Imagine a world with action that honors the heart, the soul and the mysteries of life."

I asked, "How will you bring these gifts of the feminine into our consciousness?" Monica replied, "I use the myths of ancient Goddesses, hence, the name Goddess Inspiration. I chose the ancient Goddesses because of the similarities between our societal values, both being a patriarchal civilization. Why do I use myths? Mythological stories have a powerful way of using parables to explain life experiences. Each Goddess that we explore will exemplify an aspect of our personality. As we identify with the individual Goddesses and their unique personalities, we will begin to understand and embrace who we truly are. We'll celebrate our uniqueness, while understanding and embracing the similarities.

The archetypes or personalities of the ancient Goddesses are universal. We all experience the different Goddess archetypes during various stages of our life. An archetype is an inner force that has a pattern of behavior requiring you to act in a specific, concrete manner. An archetype, once activated, is very powerful. If you are unaware of the archetype, then chances are you will become a victim of that archetype.

The good news is that through this workshop you can become aware of the various archetypes. So, instead of becoming a victim, you can experience and learn how to call up the archetypes and use them as support when needed."

I asked Monica if knowing the different Goddess archetypes help us to only understand ourselves better or if it will help us relate better to other women in our life. Monica said, "Of course! Knowing the archetypes help you learn and understand yourself more as well as definitely help you to understand and relate to other women. With this worldly understanding you'll be able to honor and respect all women in their own life pattern. You will no longer have the tendency to judge other women, instead you'll accept, acknowledge, support, even celebrate their path."

I asked Monica to show me how this might look, so she said, "Okay, let's play!"

Using our imagination, Monica guided me on a fantasy trip to a wedding. In a flash, our surroundings change and to my surprise we are sitting in the choir loft of a beautiful church. From this vantage point, we see the entire church filled with guests. All eyes are on the bride and groom as they exchange their wedding vows. We focus our attention on the bride. She is absolutely radiant as she says, "I DO." Soon the couple kisses, sealing their vows. The bride looks into the eyes of her new husband, and we feel her deep connection and commitment to him. Smiling, the couple turns to their guests and the minister announces, "It is my great pleasure to introduce Mr and Mrs Alvin Maker". The bride slips her arm over her husband's and feeling very proud, almost superior to her unmarried friends, walks like a queen slowly down the aisle. With this observation, Monica points out this bride is a Hera, the Goddess of Marriage and Commitment. For a Hera, being a wife is the most important role in her life.

We follow the couple to the reception that was being held in an outdoor garden. Monica chooses a branch in one of the trees where we comfortably Goddess watch. It is gorgeous! The flowers were in bloom and a breeze carries the sweet fragrance of summer. Trees provide shade and coolness on this summer afternoon. There is a very festive atmosphere. Our attention is drawn to a female guest who is serving food to several children. She is

warm and tender, always looking around, checking to see if anybody needs anything. She is smiling and enjoying herself while assisting others. Monica explained she is an excellent example of a Demeter, the abundant Goddess Mother. Demeter experiences life as a "caretaker", mother and general nurturer as the most important role in her life.

From the branch of the tree, we spot a woman who looks distraught. Slowly, a younger woman approaches. She is dressed in a flowing pastel blue, flower print dress with flowers in her hair. She looks so innocent, almost naive. We feel she can sense the pain of this troubled woman. She glances around the reception until she makes eye contact with an older woman, her mother. She seeks an approving nod before starting up a conversation with this distraught woman. With the mother's approval, the young woman sits next to the woman and starts up a conversation, offering comfort and a reassuring hug. Monica smiles and says, "this young woman is Persephone, a very sensitive and intuitive Goddess. She experiences life beyond the physical world.

We hear a noise and look around. There's a commotion coming from the area near the fountain. We notice many guests are agitated and leaving the area. That's when we see two dogs fighting. From out of the group, a woman moves quickly and decisively to separate the dogs. She has an air of confidence with the animals and the animals respond to her gentleness and confident demeanor. While petting and calming the dogs, she checks the dogs for injuries. Soon, the two dogs that were fighting just moments ago are playing nicely and go merrily on their way. We are curious about this woman so we take a closer look. She looks a little out of place for a wedding. She has a style all her own. Her dress is very casual and comfortable. She's not wearing any make-up and even though her hair is going gray, she does nothing to hide it. When she returns to her girlfriends to finish their conversation, a man approaches but soon leaves. The emotional discussion about woman's rights and the protection of children made him uncomfortable. Monica explains she represents Artemis. Goddess Artemis is passionate about protecting the female sisterhood and the rights of women, children and all the creatures of earth.

The reception is alive with joy, laughter and music. Many guests are dancing. Our attention is drawn to a group, who is purposely standing apart from the party. A woman standing in the middle of this group catches our attention. She was a tall woman wearing a classic style, cream-colored skirt suit. Her hair is stylishly cut. She actually looks too "perfect," as though she walked off the cover of some magazine. She seems very self-assured and is participating in a lively discussion. She is the only woman standing among several men and appears very comfortable in this situation. Our attention focuses on the conversation and we are surprised by her expertise, mixed with practicality. She is offering many strategies and tips on how to be successful in business, explaining how she climbed the corporate ladder to become VP. We are so engrossed in this conversation, we almost fall out of the tree. Monica smiles and says, "It's obvious that Athena is in her element and enjoying herself." Goddess Athena is an intellectual who is very career and success driven.

As we regain our balance in the tree, we notice a new couple is just arriving. The man is well dressed and his wife has an outfit that coordinates. They look great together. She is draped on his arm, there is no doubt they are a couple. She leaves her husband to get him a drink and a plate of food, serving him before she gets herself food. At the food table, she starts talking to someone that looks like an important man. Taking the man's arm, she leads him over to her husband and involves them in a conversation. Monica mentions this behavior is typical of a Hera, supporting her husband to be powerful and important. Mid-sentence the men go quiet. Suddenly Hera's demeanor changes as her eyes move in the direction of her husband's fascination. She notices a woman dancing provocatively and sensually. She inserts her arm under her husband's elbow and moves in close, almost in a protective stance. She is jealous. Monica exclaims, "I know that feeling!"

We could not miss this other woman, she was wearing a form fitting red dress and she obviously takes great care with her make-up and hair. She exudes confidence, both in the way she looks and in the movement of her body. She flows with the rhythm of the music. She is more than beautiful, she is in love with her experience and everybody is naturally drawn to look at her. She is aware of people looking at her, but it does not disturb or distract her, she is pure innocence in the experience. She is the embodiment of passion and the man she is dancing with is captivated by this display as we are. We are so entranced by this display we lose all track of time. I have to shake Monica from her trance. "Hey, who is this Goddess?" Monica responds that she is Aphrodite, the Goddess of Sensuality and Love. It is very easy to lose all sense of time with this Goddess. She enjoys beauty, for beauty's sake, just because. Goddess Aphrodite can inspire us to be "ONE," to be "IN LOVE" with ourselves, spirit, another person, a project, or life in general.

Monica asked me, "How would you like to experience and enjoy all these Goddesses?" My response was, "Is that really possible?" Monica smiled and said, "Yes, that's the gift that is within every woman."

I enthusiastically replied... "WHERE DO I SIGN UP?"

AS WOMEN, we are asked to be so many things to ourselves and others. We are mothers, sisters, bosses, lovers, wives, designers, and chauffeurs. If we are so in charge of our lives, then why is it so many women feel more lost and out of control than ever?

We extend and expand, giving of ourselves until our storehouses of empathy and wells of compassion have run dry. As May Day arrives to remind us of our feminine roots, take a personal inventory. As the earth warms and awakens ask yourself, what do I desire for my life? Perhaps you would like to be more fulfilled in relationships with your partner or family, your body or Self. Have you resolved to show up more fully in your life? Are you ready to relinquish the old and embrace the Now?

Over the last five years I have seen my life propelled in the direction I have long desired as a result of working with Dr. Mónica Garaycochea . I am continually renewed with a sense of curiosity for life. Even on a bad hair day I find myself wondering, "What's next? What's new for me?" I have gained the tools to move into the life that I have always wanted. How does honoring our connection to the Divine Feminine manifest such profound results

About the Author

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