

The Rutgers DSW Program

Module Title: Trauma, Temenos, and Transformation: Alchemy, Myth and Human Development

Instructor:

Residency: August 2018

Date:

Module Description:

In many cases in psychiatry, the patient who comes to us has a story that is not told, and which as a rule no one knows of. To my mind, therapy only really begins after the investigation of that wholly personal story. It is the patient's secret, the rock against which he is shattered. If I know his secret story, I have a key to the treatment. The doctor's task is to find out how to gain that knowledge. In most cases exploration of the conscious material is insufficient . . . In therapy the problem is always the whole person, never the symptom alone. We must ask questions which challenge the whole personality. C.G. Jung

Many of the myths, traditions and rituals that once guided us on our shared journey of the human experience—and helped give purpose to our lives—are lacking in our modern world. As a result, we often wander hopelessly while our spirit aches for a safe place where we can face our fears and explore our true calling.

Alchemy, a non-profit organization based in Akron, Ohio, creates just such a safe environment—a *temenos*—where through the telling, discussion and analysis of mythological stories and fairy tales urban adolescent males learn to “become the hero in their own story.” Utilizing this same approach, adults will work through a myth while the myth simultaneously works through them. “*Myths are not just for putting children asleep, but for waking adults up.*” This workshop is designed to assist in an awakening.

The foundational theory of Alchemy, based upon the work of C.G. Jung, the Akan people of West Africa and common themes of myth, will be explored and experienced. The socialization and psychology of urban male youth will be inspected and the importance of a Temenos to address trauma will be examined—all the while, providing a blueprint of how myth can be applied in any setting, with anyone, assisting in the development of the psyche.

Module Objectives:

- Explain the basis and importance of Temenos, identifying a personal temenos;
- Compare and contrast situations in a myth to real-life situations;
- Apply myth as a tool for understanding the vicissitudes of life;
- Identify Theories that may relate to the use of myth.

Required Readings:

1. Johnson, Robert, A. *He: Understanding Masculine Psychology*. New York: Harper & Row, 1989.

OR

2. . . ., *She: Understanding Feminine Psychology*. New York: Harper & Row, 1989.

Recommended Readings:

1. Bond, Stephenson, D. *Living Myth: Personal Meaning as a Way of Life*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1993.
2. Campbell, Joseph. *The Power of Myth*. New York: Doubleday, 1988.
3. . . ., *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1973.
4. May, Rollo. *The Cry For Myth*. New York: Dell, 1991.