

Modern Archetypes Are Altering the Future

There is no passion to be found playing small—in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living.

—NELSON MANDELA

To play the game well is one thing. To play it with style and creativity is even better. But changing the game itself is a different level of play entirely, a level that you must be willing to master if you are to advance your path as a responsible entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship frequently requires courage. This is especially true for responsible entrepreneurs, who are willing to put themselves and their resources on the line to improve the world in a significant way.

Jeffrey Hollander, the founder of Seventh Generation, was fired from his own company after almost twenty-five years at the helm. The transition required him to do some serious soul searching. He realized that, in the interest of creating better ways of doing business, he had been refusing to play the game by the old rules. But his actions, as principled and innovative as they had been, hadn't really affected how others were playing the game. With this realization, he came to understand that he needed to become a game changer.

Many entrepreneurs who set out to apply their energies to making a difference find themselves sucked into a vortex of rules that were defined by others. They can't completely escape. That's when they discover that if you want to operate from a place of creative freedom, you have to take on defining the game itself, changing the rules for everyone.

Four Domains for Changing the Game

Responsible entrepreneurs tend to focus their game-changing aspirations in one of four distinct domains:

1. *Industries*, where the work is to disrupt and replace automatic patterns with ones that are more life affirming.
2. *Social systems*, where the work is to move upstream to the causes of social problems and address them at their source.
3. *Cultural paradigms*, where the work is to make the belief systems that unconsciously govern human experience more holistic and embracing.
4. *Foundational agreements*, where the work is to renew and vitalize the deeper intention behind the governing documents, such as a corporate charter or the U.S. Constitution, that explicitly lay out the social contract by which a community or nation defines itself.

Four Timeless Leadership Archetypes Evident Everywhere Today

These four domains correspond very closely to a hierarchy of archetypal leadership roles that have been observed again and again in traditional cultures around the world. Although hidden from the awareness of most modern business people, these roles have continued to manifest themselves in modified form right up to the present day. Anthropologists and native peoples name them Warrior, Clown, Hunter, and Headman. These archetypes have long provided a structured and powerful way to evoke

the leadership most needed by traditional (and modern!) communities at any given time.

1. The Warrior protects the values of a community, constantly calling people to remember what gives their lives meaning. In the world of business, this work takes place within the domain of industry.
2. The Clown pokes fun at collective self-centeredness and unconsciousness, opening space for humility and heartfelt appreciation of others. The Clown is therefore naturally called to work within the domain of social systems.
3. The Hunter perpetuates life by strengthening the mutual exchange between the tribe and the natural world. In the modern world, the Hunter's domain is cultural paradigms.
4. The Headman (or Headwoman in increasingly many cases) awakens individuals to their potential and inspires them to work with others in order to contribute to something larger than themselves. The domain of the Headman is the reorientation of people to the deeper meaning of their foundational agreements.

The four archetypes are all necessary to the healthy functioning of society, and taken together they form a whole system. If any one of them is missing, society becomes vulnerable. If the Warrior impulse is missing, conformity drives behaviors and commoditization drives economies—the opposite of the pursuit of singularity and meaning. Warriors pursue the integrity and creativity that enable a society to orient to what could be rather than settling for what already is.

If the Clown is missing, inequity and inequality become more severe. No one pays attention to the disproportionate impacts of social choices on the poor or dispossessed. No one champions the mutual bonds of obligation that maintain the integrity of the social fabric. Clowns illuminate and transform the causes of class war.

If the Hunter is missing, cultural cohesion breaks down. People identify as members of one interest group or another and lobby for their part of the pie. They lose the ability to see what the whole needs in order

to maintain its integrity. Conflicting paradigms do battle over how the whole should work, as each interest group claims to speak for it and attempts to dominate it. A Hunter perspective grasps and addresses the fragmentation that underlies culture wars.

If the Headman impulse is missing, society and self-governance can't evolve. A Headman or Headwoman recognizes entropy when it sets in and intervenes to catalyze its opposite. Rather than managing symptoms, he or she works to reinspirit the community.

In traditional societies it was understood that individuals would take up one or another of these roles as needed by the tribe. Some people might have had natural gifts that predisposed them to one archetype or another, but all were expected to help fight the battles, gather the food, and sit in council to determine the direction of the community. A tribal member might naturally have moved through the different roles at different points in his or her life as a reflection of inner growth and maturity.

An Archetype Is a Mantle You Consciously Take Up

It may be helpful to note that I use the word “archetype” slightly differently from how it is customarily applied in modern psychology. For me, an archetype is a *paradigmatic pattern* that offers people a way to access something in themselves—something universal or beyond their habitual way of working and thinking. Thought of in this way, an archetype is something that one can aspire to live up to and that offers a cohesive set of beliefs about how things should or could be.

Archetypes can function as active agents in your psyche and in your interactions with the world. They can raise aspiration and encourage striving, offering a way to move beyond your existing self-image. They engender opportunities for learning, discovery, and personal growth. Perhaps most important, they enable new and unexpected ways to make a contribution.

When people point to Gandhi, Mandela, or Buddha as role models, they mean that these are exemplars of life lived according to a set

of higher principles. They exhibit the exceptional realization of human potential. They are, in other words, people who have striven to live through an archetype as they engaged the world.

In order to advance and evolve, societies need members who are willing to extend themselves beyond existing norms and patterns of behavior. Individuals who take on an archetypal role provide critically important leadership that enables societies to remain vibrant, healthy, and dynamic. Often it is in periods of crisis and disruption that the need for this kind of leadership becomes most apparent. However, the choice to step into such a role is always available to people of good conscience. One eloquent example is the story of how the tribal peoples of Botswana preserved their independence from European incursions at the end of the nineteenth century and birthed a new African nation.

Archetypal Leadership and the Birth of a Nation

The modern nation of Botswana came into being as a protectorate of Britain in 1885, in order to defend its territory against the commercial and political opportunism of Cecil Rhodes and his competitors among Boer mining companies. At that time, three main tribes inhabited the region, which lies north and east of the countries now known as South Africa and Zimbabwe. A state of low-grade warfare between tribal people and European commercial interests had been decimating communities throughout southern Africa for decades, and these three tribes were beginning to experience incursions into their own territory. They could see the likely future they were facing.

One of the tribal chiefs, Khama III, was a gifted Headman. He initiated an alliance with the other two chieftains, Bathoen (a natural Hunter) and Sebele (a Clown), in order to create a shared strategy for defense. It quickly became clear that, even working together, they did not have the strength to fend off the invaders. What they were missing was a Warrior—a critical dimension if they were to maintain their independence—and they decided to invite the British government to take on this leadership and become their fourth partner.

They traveled to London to petition the queen to make Botswana a protectorate. As part of this negotiation, they secured the right to govern themselves as an independent authority while providing Britain with a railroad easement and a bulwark against the growing hegemony of Rhodes in the region. Because they were seeking a leadership partnership, Khama III had the foresight to insist on a joint council that would ensure full transparency and mutual influence—a key contributor to the long-term success of his strategy.

Each of the three tribal chiefs had a history that fueled his commitment to concerns beyond himself. This would become instrumental in the development of his unique character and his contribution to the creation of powerful founding institutions for the new nation.

In the role of Headman, as the first elected president of the new protectorate, Khama III sought to grow the governing institutions that would lead to a society free from the corrosive influence of racism. As a young man he had been sent to pursue his legal education at Oxford, but had been denied admission because of his race. While in England, he had fallen in love with a woman connected to his circle of friends. When they applied to be married as a mixed-race couple, a firestorm of controversy had erupted, not only among white English society but also among the members of his tribe. Although they eventually married, the prejudice in Botswana was so strong that Khama III had been forced to leave his wife behind when he returned home.

Thus when it came time to establish the new government of Botswana, the deep personal impact of these experiences caused Khama III to pursue the vision of a society blind to race. He designed political systems based on full democratic participation of individuals, regardless of race, heritage, entitlement, or sex.

Bathoen, the second tribal leader, focused on creating a post-tribal culture. His father, a tribal king, had died when he was a young boy. The leadership vacuum created by Bathoen's inability to step into his hereditary role had given him firsthand experience of the dynamics that create war. Everywhere he looked he saw people doing battle over fundamental resources. When he finally was installed as king, it was with a strongly

held conviction that he needed to shift the traditions that generate perpetual conflict. He had immediately set out to establish common ownership of the land base, so that the tribe as a whole would benefit whenever value was generated from it.

As one of the founders of Botswana, Bathoen enshrined common ownership of the land within the constitution. When diamond deposits were discovered a year later, their ownership was secured in the name of the people. Rather than becoming the cause of tribal warfare, this shared mineral wealth fueled the rapid development of the country into a stable and prosperous democracy. Characteristically, Bathoen sought to have people identify as members of a nation rather than of a tribe. In one instance, he designed the nation's first census without a box for declaring tribal or racial ancestry—a tradition that has been preserved up to the present day.

Sebele, a Clown, wanted to create social systems that enabled full participation for everyone. This led him to establish free, universal education for Botswana. As a child, he had survived a brutal massacre by white South Africans attempting to expand their hegemony north into his tribe's territory. This had caused Sebele, a deeply religious man, to pursue a lifelong quest to understand the causes of war and to discover the means to end it. He had come to the realization that the single greatest antidote to violence was education, and with the help of missionary organizations he had begun to set up a system of schools for his tribe. His success in this effort brought him to the attention of the other founders of Botswana, who invited him to join their historic mission to London. Although Sebele died within a few years of the establishment of the protectorate, in that time he was able to create the infrastructure to extend education to all people, including girls, which provided the basis for a profoundly egalitarian society.

The integration of these four leadership styles or approaches launched a process of successful nation building that may be unique in the history of colonialism. With the threat of British military power to help secure the new nation's borders, the founders set to work embedding the values that would enable Botswana to avoid the history of

instability, despotism, tribal conflict, and racism that poisoned neighboring Southern Africa for generations. Over time, this enabled Botswana to become the oldest and most stable democracy on the continent, with one of its strongest economies.

Accessing an Archetype Gives You More Choices and Power

Great power can be derived from working with living archetypes—power that can be beneficial or destructive. The destructive side of an archetype is far more likely to manifest when it is operating unconsciously. Making archetypes explicit enables leaders to develop ways of working that are consonant with an archetypal role, while avoiding its characteristic pitfalls. In the chapters that follow, I will offer a framework to help you to become less habitual and automatic about the influence of these archetypes. By understanding the core motivations and methods of each, you can exercise greater choice about how to access archetypal energies in order to drive changes in the world that express your own character and destiny.

In other words, how you use these archetypes depends on a large number of variables, about which you can exercise a great deal of conscious choice. Although most of us have a natural tendency toward or preference for one or another of these archetypes, all of us have the potential to engage with each of them as needed. First of all, the domain within which you choose to change the game is a good indicator of the archetypal energy that will be required. If the game is large enough, you may find that you will have to draw on all of the archetypes. The good news is that this doesn't have to be something you do alone. Just as the founders of Botswana understood that they needed each other to take on their great task, you too can ask for support from colleagues or peers—either to help you live up to the demands placed on you by a specific archetype or to partner with you to invoke the layered, multifaceted perspective that becomes possible when all four are present.