

# Persephone – Daughter & Goddess of the Underworld

These researches are based on Jean Bolen's book 'Goddesses in everywoman'

I start this journey into the Feminine Archetypes with Persephone, the Maiden & Mother's Daughter as she represents an image that most women have to deal with from very early childhood on and throughout life: to be a good girl and please others.

Persephone's positive qualities, such as being attentive, receptive, quiet, flexible, adaptable and innocent still determine the image in many cultures of how a "perfect woman" should be. This pretty, yet incomplete image of a woman's nature has caused immense suffering to numerous women who do not feel these attributes are natural to them.

Persephone's image may also bring melancholic memories of the past days for women who repress their playfulness and girlish innocence in adulthood to avoid vulnerability and being manipulated by others, .

Let's have a closer look to this Goddess who has much more to offer than just innocence and passivity.

## Mythology

Persephone is the only daughter of Zeus & Demeter. After years of a carefree childhood while gathering flowers and playing with her friends, she was kidnapped by Hades, God of the Underworld. Through the persistent efforts of her mother, she was released from the Underworld and came back to be joyfully reunited with her parents, where she continued to have a very close bond with her mother. However, she had eaten some Pomegranate seeds before being set free which tethered her to the Underworld. An important part of her soul stays deeply connected to the Underworld where she now becomes a guide for those who are looking for her. This also makes her, next to the Maiden and Mother's daughter, the Goddess of the Underworld.

## Persephone – the Archetype

A Persephone Woman is usually passive in attitude. She does not act but is acted on by others. She is the sleeping princess waiting for a prince to come along and kiss her awake.

Her relationship to her mother is often too close to develop an independent sense of herself. A relationship with a man can be the means through which a Persephone woman separates from a dominating mother. Her ease to receive the projection of a man's unconscious image of women and conform to this image makes her the perfect "anima woman;" quiet, eager to please and easily malleable.

She also represents spring, everlasting youth, innocence and pureness; all of these qualities offer a women the opportunity for renewal and a new start after difficult times in her life.

## Positive aspects

Persephone belongs to the Vulnerable Goddesses, thus she is innately receptive and attentive to others. She often stays receptive to change and young in spirit all her life. Her playfulness and innocent way of looking at the world may leave her unaffected by what's going on around her. A sense of innocence about her sensuality and sexuality gives a Persephone woman this special charm which calls for being taken care of. However, she may miss sexual passion in her life. Because she often lacks direction and individual drive she has the most possible routes for growth among all the Goddess archetypes. This type of woman has an inherent understanding of the unconsciousness in human's psyche (the Underworld). If she evolves and matures in the different phases of her life, she becomes the Queen of the Underworld and can bring important healing to others through mediating between ordinary and non-ordinary reality.

## Shadow aspects

If a Persephone woman does not cultivate some other archetypes in her life, such as Artemis or Aphrodite, she can be easily manipulated and dominated by others. Her lack of action and passion makes it difficult for her to fully participate in life. Even if she decides to marry or chooses a career, she may never feel fully committed and therefore will not take full responsibility for her actions. As she struggles with initiative and persistence she can easily fall into the trap of lying, deviousness or manipulation to get what she wants. Only when she lacks someone to do things for her or someone to blame can a Persephone woman grow.

## How to balance a too strong Persephone

If passivity, dependence and need of approval from others are the core of your personality, apply the following practices:

### Body

- Ground yourself through physical work, digging in the earth, chopping wood ect
- Awaken your sensuality : hot bath, body lotion, sensual oils, erotic dances ect
- Practice Vinyasa / Asthanga Yoga, go running
- Get out of your comfort zone and take risks

### Mind

- Make your own decisions, take risks
- Plan time & space for creativity and efficient tasks
- Push yourself through difficult moments, cultivate endurance
- Practice focus, strategy and commitment

### Emotions

- Become aware of what you want and state it
- Say "No" to others, at least 3 times a day
- Become aware when you are lying or manipulating and correct it
- Do one thing every day that scares you or seems risky to you
- Invite Artemis (focused concentration) and Aphrodite (sensuality & creativity)

## How to activate Persephone in your life

If you lack playfulness, innocence and receptivity you may want to integrate the following practices:

### Body

- Spend time in nature, walk barefoot, gather flowers / shells / stones
- Dance, play, spend time with children and pets
- Practice Yin / Restorative Yoga to connect with your receptivity

### Mind

- Before taking action, take a breath and give things a chance to unfold on their own
- Stay curious, try to see the world through the eyes of a child
- Integrate some time without any plans or schedules

### Emotions

- Cultivate kindness towards yourself (rather than impatience and self-criticism)
- Embrace periods of rest and 'lying fallow'
- Become more receptive for how others may feel, put yourself in their shoes

**“Persephone, help me to stay open & receive”**

