

Hera – Wife & Goddess of Marriage

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

With Hera we explore another of the Vulnerable Goddesses. They are very relationship-oriented and easy to make commitments. Hera's full focus consists in not only finding a partner or mate, but in finding a man who is ready for commitment and marriage. Without a partner, a Hera woman sees herself as incomplete and insufficient which leads to her emotional suffering. Then, she may treat single and unmarried women with despise and pity.

In many cultures, a Hera influenced woman is the queen of the house and can fully blossom within fixed rules and traditions. In our modern world, a Hera woman should benefit from the freedom to choose a mate and resist marriage until she knows enough about her husband-to-be. Once married, she depends on the character of the man she marries for her sense of worth and on his capacity to love her. He will decide who she will be – a fulfilled Hera or a raging disillusioned Hera. A Hera woman has difficulties in assessing underlying characters or in realizing patterns of behaviour. She must decide over and over again whom she trusts.

Let's have a closer look to this powerful Goddess who can be so loving and blossoming and so destructive and furious at the same time:

Mythology

Hera is a child of Rhea and Cronos (like Hestia). She is swallowed as soon as she is born as are four of her siblings. When she emerges from her captivity in Cronos, she is already a young girl. She is placed into the loving care of two nature deities who become her foster parents. When Zeus gets attracted by her (never mind that he is her brother, the Olympians had their own rules or lack of them, when it came to relationships) he changes himself into a shivering little bird on which Hera takes pity. To warm him up she holds him to her breast. In this moment Zeus sheds his disguise and tries to force himself on her – without success. Hera resists his amorous efforts until he promises to marry her. Their honeymoon is said to have lasted 300 years. When this time is over, Zeus reverts to his premarital promiscuous ways and time and time again becomes unfaithful to his furious betrayed wife Hera.

Hera – the Archetype

As the Goddess of Marriage, Hera is revered and reviled, honoured and humiliated. She, more than any other goddess, has markedly positive and negative attributes. The same is true for the Hera archetype, an intensely powerful force for joy and pain in a woman's personality.

She is one hundred percent loyal to her husband. Friends, family or even her own children cannot count on her protection as she always puts him on first place. If her husband becomes unfaithful, Hera's rage and actions of revenge are never directed towards her partner. Instead, she directs all her furious power towards the woman of his desire. She would literally lose her identification and meaning of life without him by her side. Having children is seen as a part of her role as wife rather than a deep calling for being the nurturing mother.

Positive aspects

A Hera woman has a strong capacity to bond, to be loyal & faithful and to endure. When happily married, a Hera woman steps into her full radiant beauty and power. A traditional marriage with culturally determined roles gives her the perfect background to fulfil all her tasks with great precision and pleasure. Another inherent quality of a Hera woman is the ability of completing a cycle and beginning anew. She is often represented as Hera the Maiden in spring; Hera the fulfilled in summer and fall; and Hera the widow in winter. By understanding this archetypal possibility, a Hera woman can either emotionally 'widow' herself by leaving a bad marriage and start anew or this cycle can be experienced internally and she lets go of the need to be a wife.

Shadow aspects

The obsession of finding fulfilment only within marriage often limits her own individual growth and potential. She usually goes for powerful men and easily gets mistrustful, jealous and even paranoid. When she is being betrayed by an unfaithful husband she can get lost in her outrage and fury without noticing the self-destructive effects on her own life. She has trouble accepting reality and is likely to believe in a mythic ending – that her husband will miss her and come back. Her loyalty for her husband can go so far that she even accepts destructive behaviour patterns such as alcoholism or abusive men.

A Hera influenced woman is the one who oppresses other women or is likely to judge and punish them to the hardest. Only if she manages to bring her attention to inner realms and other forms of motivation and satisfaction will a Hera woman grow beyond these negative behaviour patterns and find peace and balance, on her own as well as within a relationship.

How to balance a too strong Hera character

If you catch yourself being obsessively jealous or not able to leave a destructive relationship apply the following practices:

Body

- Get out of your mind and into your body by running, yoga, dancing
- Practice relaxing practices that connect with your breath (Tai Chi)
- Spend enough time in nature

Mind

- Recognize your obsession and destructive patterns
- Cultivate loving kindness for yourself
- Catch yourself when judging other women and wish them well

Emotions

- Connect with other women
- Trust your own wholeness
- Invite Artemis (sisterhood) and Hestia (going inward)

How to activate Hera in your life

If you lack the ability for commitment and faithfulness integrate the following practices:

Body

- Commit to a daily physical practice and stick to it
- Practice team sports
- Practice Pranayama or Meditation to gather your energy

Mind

- Decide to trust others
- Stay connected to people who trigger you
- Don't run away when the first difficulties arise

Emotions

- Recall the positive aspects of people around you
- Explore your ability to trust yourself and others
- Stay faithful to friends / partners throughout difficulties

**“Hera, help me to make a commitment
and be faithful”**

