

The **Healthy Masculine 4 Part Series** will take a look at each of the 4 masculine archetypes outlined by Moore, and explore – by way of council, NVC, and group agreements creating safely, connection, and heart centred vulnerability – how to develop them more fully. These 4 masculine archetypes – although not the only way – helps ground our Healthy Masculine Circle exploration as a starting point to share, connect and integrate.

## The Lover Archetype

Adapted from the [artofmanliness.com](http://artofmanliness.com) series

According to Moore and other Jungians, each archetype powers up at certain phases in life. The Lover is the archetype of youthful idealism and excitement and is usually the first of the archetypes to develop. The King archetype usually powers up last and is a culmination of the other archetypes.

### The Lover in Its Fullness

There are many types of love—a love for family, for friends, for God, and for life itself—and the Lover archetype passionately seeks after them all as the archetype of emotion, feeling, idealism, and sensuality. Like the word “lover,” sensuality is often exclusively associated with sex but really has a far broader application. Being sensual means opening up and using all of your senses in all areas of your life—touching, tasting, smelling, hearing, and seeing – or in other words – experiencing as many dimensions of life as possible, as often as possible. Thus, when a person taps into the Lover archetype’s energy, they feel alive with vim & vigour, connected to the world and those around them. A person in touch with the Lover archetype feels deeply, whether those feelings are of joy or pain.

The Lover is attuned to the mysterious forces underlying our everyday existence; this is the archetype that fuels a person’s spirituality, and the one in which the Muses reside. When we get those flashes of inspiration or sparks of creativity, that’s Lover energy manifesting itself in our lives. Someone who takes time to develop this archetype will experience those hunches, insights, and premonitions more frequently than those who don’t. A person who has fully developed the Lover archetype in their life is also often adept at reading people and social cues. Being empathetic with others and understanding how to get along and connect with a wide variety of people.

Because the Lover is so alive and sensual, they enjoy all of life’s pleasures, whether it be good food and drink, beautiful art, or gorgeous humans. This is the archetype that spurs our appetites. But these hungers aren’t just for “baser” pleasures like sex and food, but for a life of meaning and purpose. And in seeking the freedom to passionately pursue these ends, the Lover can see limits and rules as constraining.

This is why the Lover archetype has a unique relationship to the other three archetypes of mature masculinity. While the Lover’s energy seeks to be boundless, the King, Warrior, and Magician archetypes provide structure and discipline. Thus the Lover’s passion fuels and powers these three life forces, and in turn, they channel and harness the Lover’s energy in a healthy way and towards worthy goals.

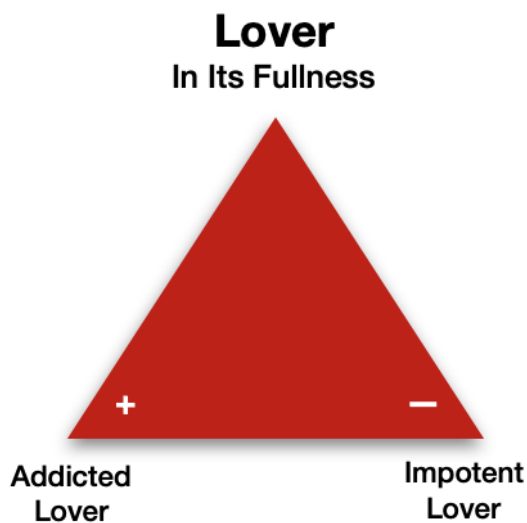
You can find the Lover archetype in myths and rituals that span culture and time. The Greek god Dionysus presents perhaps the most salient example. Dionysus was the god of wine, merriment, art, passion, and sex. His followers believed that when a man became so overcome with emotion that he appeared mad, Dionysus was to blame. The yearly festival held in his honour each spring was a ritual inspired by the Lover archetype: lots of drinking, lots of dancing, lots of theatre, and lots of sex.

A modern story that exemplifies the Lover archetype is *Zorba the Greek*. Zorba is a man who lives life fully. He’s earthy. He loves good food and drink. He dances his heart out. Zorba understands that for a man to be truly free, he needs to have a deep emotional life; he needs a little madness.

The Lover archetype is usually the first that develops. Look at most young folk and you see that they’re often ruled by the passionate Lover archetype. They’re looking for new and exciting endeavours, they develop intense romantic and sexual relationships, and they’re filled with youthful idealism. Their experiences are marked by an acute *intensity*.

## The Shadows of the Lover

Remember that each archetype has both a pinnacle, which represents the fullness of the archetype, and a bi-polar shadow split. These shadows are the result of the archetype not being integrated in a healthy and coherent way. The two shadows of the Lover archetype are the *Addicted Lover* and the *Impotent Lover*.



### The Addicted Lover

If the other archetypes do not harness the Lover's energy, the Addicted Lover shadow can result. A person possessed by the Addicted Lover is, as Moore puts it, "eternally restless", forever searching for that one thing, person, or experience that will make them feel truly alive. But whether it's because they have overinflated expectations, or because they don't even know what they're searching for in the first place, the vague hunger that endlessly hounds them is never satisfied.

The Addicted Lover falls in love with everyone they date, and then wallows in despair when they get dumped. They constantly get ideas for inventions or businesses that will make them rich, but they never work at them long enough to get them off the ground. Their apartment is cluttered with junk they bought on a whim, but never used. Their passport filled with stamps, but don't feel any happier than before they left home to travel the world.

The Addicted Lover is a collector—of experiences, possessions, or lovers. But without any structure, any overarching life philosophy to connect the things they collect, their life feels fragmentary instead of whole. Without a channel through which to run, the Lover's energy dissipates into a million directions.

The flip side of this shadow is to take all of the Lover's energy and focuses it on one thing, becoming so obsessed with the objects of their desire that instead of bringing joy, they bring destruction and ruin. Perhaps you know someone who became so involved in a vice, a project, or even a hobby that it ruined them financially and destroyed their relationships. That was someone possessed by the Addicted Lover.

### The Impotent Lover

The Impotent Lover shadow arises when a person is out of touch with the Lover archetype in its fullness. While the Lover in their fullness sees the world in vivid colours and textures, the Impotent Lover only sees grey. People dogged by the Impotent Lover archetype feel depressed, flat, and dead inside. Nothing brings them joy anymore. They've lost their passion for life. Relationships, whether romantic or platonic, struggle and falter for the person possessed by the Impotent Lover. Libido is non-existent in these folks, as is their sex life.

While the Addicted Lover does not give themselves enough structure, the Impotent Lover can arise in someone who disciplines themselves too much. This is often the case with devoutly religious folk, who, going far beyond the admonishments of their faith, laden themselves with overly prudish rules, and feel shame when "indulging" in life's pleasures. The energy of the Lover archetype builds up behind this dam of limits, and without a healthy channel to pursue, sooner or later it bursts forth in destructive ways. The Impotent Lover becomes the Addicted Lover.

## The Adolescent Archetypes

To understand each of the four archetypes of mature masculinity, we need to explore their precursors. There are four adolescent archetypes which develop into the mature archetypes. Properly accessing and harnessing their energies is essential for full development. These archetypes instill a sense of wonder, play, and energy—traits that are essential for learning and development. The adolescent archetypes are positive but immature energies that, with proper masculine guidance, develop into the archetypes of mature masculine.

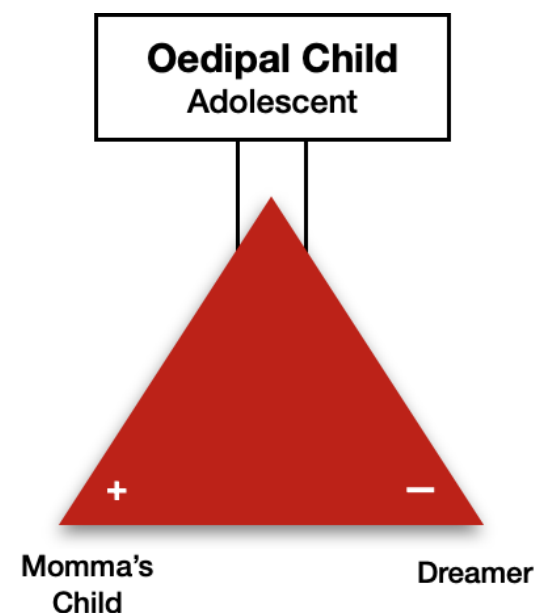
## The Oedipal Child

Freud's idea is that boys have a repressed sexual desire for their mothers. Moore does argue that a boy's yearning for "the nurturing, infinitely good, infinitely beautiful Mother," is at the root of this archetype. But this longing is not for a boy's *actual* mother, but rather for the feminine energy of the "Great Mother—the Goddess in her many forms in the myths and legends of many peoples and cultures."

The Oedipal Child archetype can be related to the philosophy of the [Romantic period](#) exploring their inner life, celebrating the power of imagination and intuition, seeking to feel and experience life deeply, and extolling the virtues of passion and free expression. They sought to tap into the energy that emanated from *Mother Nature*.

The Oedipal Child archetype gives a youngster the desire to forge relationships with others and the affection and warmth to nurture those relationships. Thus, at the heart of this archetypes is the desire for *connection*—a connection with oneself, with the deeper forces of life, with nature, and with other people. In this way, the Oedipal Child archetype contains the seeds of an adult's spirituality. It can be a good thing when it's nurtured into the mature Lover archetype by masculine energy. If it's not – these shadows are the result:

## The Shadows of the Oedipal Child



### The Mama's Boy.

Instead of tapping into the positive feminine energy associated with "the Great Mother," the Mama's Boy fixates on the energy as *embodied* by their real mother (and other women); he is *too* connected to his mom. Jung would argue that this shadow archetype takes control when there is no father, or a weak father in the home.

The Mama's Boy shadow manifests itself in various ways. The most obvious is the child (or adult) who's "tied to Mama's apron strings." They never want to offend, hurt, or worry their mother. They live to please dear old mom, even if that means putting her desires and wishes above their own. Nothing gives them more satisfaction than hearing their mom say, "That's a good child."

Many adults never break out from under the influence of the Mama's Boy shadow. They always acquiesce to their mother's wishes and put what mom wants ahead of what their partners want (and what they themselves want). These adults never learn that children were made to leave their mother and father and cleave unto their own partners.

Other ways the Mama's Boy shadow rears its ugly head in adults is excessive porn use. An overbearing desire for union with one's mother and a failure to harness feminine energy in a healthy way will result in adults looking to fill that void and find that connection elsewhere. But of course, that can never fill that role as the Mother archetype. So, an adult under the power of the Mama's Boy shadow moves from failed relationship to failed relationship.

### The Dreamer.

The passive shadow of the Oedipal Child archetype is the Dreamer. Instead of seeking connection with others (especially with Mother), the Dreamer is aloof. While the positive Oedipal Child archetype fuels spirituality, the Dreamer pushes this desire for other-worldliness to an extreme, cutting off from human relationships to be alone.

While there's certainly nothing wrong with introspection and solitude, under the influence of the Dreamer shadow too often has their head in the clouds and drifts away from reality. Spending too much time dreaming, and not enough time learning how to have relationships with other people, they don't develop the social skills needed to make their dreams come true, becoming stunted and *unconnected*.

## Accessing the Oedipal Child Archetype as an Adult

A person who has successfully integrated the Oedipal Child into their psyche understands the *gentle* part of being masculine. They can be warm, even “sweet” with others, and can be introspective and spiritual while still keeping their feet on the ground. They are not afraid to tap into “feminine” energy, but they are not dominated by it either. They love their mother, and have learned much from her, but they are decidedly their own adult.

## Accessing the **Lover** Archetype

According to Moore, the Lover is the most repressed and stunted archetype today. Masculine people in the West aren’t encouraged to be “in touch with their feelings,” but rather be coolly detached from anything and anybody. But the great people of history understood that emotion, properly harnessed, is what drives greatness. The ancient Greeks called this passion for life “thumos”. It’s a fire in the belly that propels a person to do great deeds.

The easiest way to tap into the Lover archetype is to take more time to really enjoy the stuff that brings you pleasure in life. The Addicted Lover is forever looking for the high that will last indefinitely. When you take the first “hit” of something – whether a new drug, a new place, a new lover, or a new car – the brain lights up with pleasure. But our brains quickly get used to the same stimuli, and each additional hit brings diminishing returns. So the Addicted Lover will then take a bigger hit of the stimulus in order to feel the same pleasure they got the first time. And soon the Addicted Lover is stuck in a destructive cycle – restlessness and dissatisfaction plague them.

The answer to short-circuiting this cycle and tapping into the Lover energy in a healthy way is by cultivating the virtue of moderation and being fully present in your life. Instead of reaching for more, you stop to experience the things you already have and do in a deeper way, using all of your senses. You turn life’s little everyday activities into indulgent, pleasure-inducing rituals.

### Examples of tapping into the **Lover** energy in a healthy way:

- Do you like drinking coffee? Create a slow, relaxing, coffee-drinking experience for yourself a couple times a week. Take a whiff of the beans before you grind them, carefully create your brew in a French press, pour it into a mug you love, and slowly sip it on the porch, really enjoying the flavour.
- Chew your food slowly and really taste the flavours. Enjoy touching and kissing your lovers skin instead of just immediately getting down to the deed, take a walk after a rain shower and breathe in that fresh smell. Remember, the Lover experiences as much of life as possible, with as many senses as possible.
- Take part in a hobby you’re passionate about and make it a priority in your schedule to spend time on that hobby. It doesn’t matter how silly it is. As long as it gives you joy, and offers you a creative outlet, do it.
- Reading also increases the Lover archetype by immersing yourself in literature and writings on a variety of subjects stimulating your brain and providing it with something to ponder. Seeking knowledge will spur the Lover’s capacity for imagination and inspiration.
- Being with Nature also helps you get in touch with the mysterious forces of life.
- Take time for romance. Plan a surprise date for your Lover(s), and write love letters or poems.

In addition to the above suggestions, Moore also provides a few techniques to access all the mature masculine archetypes more fully in our lives. These techniques require what Moore calls active imagination.

Moore suggests admiring and learning about people who exemplify each archetype. For the Lover, you can read biographies and study the work of great artists you admire. Maybe you can spend a month studying the life of Leonardo da Vinci. Or if you’re a Hemingway fan, read all of Papa’s novels.

A final technique to access the archetypes in your life is to “act as if” you’re already accessing the archetype in your life. It’s the old “fake it until you make it” philosophy espoused by Aristotle. If you feel as if the Impotent Lover has taken control of your psyche and you’ve lost your vim and vigour, act as if you were passionate for life and were accessing the Lover archetype fully. If art never really interested you, visit a museum and really look at the art. Act as if you’re really interested and pretty soon you might find yourself no longer having to pretend.

## Fullness or Shadow – how do I know?

- I know my **Lover** is in its Fullness and is supporting me when:
  - I'm connected with abundance and love
    - *This looks like taking care of myself first ... and then loving the world.*
- I know my Shadow **Lover** is sabotaging me when:
  - All I see is scarcity:
    - *scarce love, scarce hope, "I'm the victim."*
  - I am lost in a sensual addiction:
    - *like drugs, food, sex, alcohol or love.*

### YOUR REFLECTIVE ANSWERS:

How does my **Lover** in its Fullness support me?

- ...
- ...

How does my Shadow **Lover** sabotage me?

- ...
- ...

