



ACTIVE
IMAGINATION
GUIDE

INDIVIDUALOGIST.COM



Introduction

With the emergence of Carl Jung as a successor of Freudian psychology, Active Imagination is one of the famous ways to understand more about the symbols that goes beyond the empirical world.

In this content, we will be discussing the whole process of Active Imagination – its roots, values, implications, and of course, how to do it. By having a holistic understanding of the topic, we will be able to not only apply it in our daily lives but also be able to analyze from our own perspective.



I. The Context

In discussing Jungian analytic psychology, it would be to our best interest to look at its roots first. As its own psychological theory, it would be fair to say that Jung has built upon the ideas of his predecessor and teacher, Sigmund Freud.

Recalling the Freudian tradition, we can see that his theory is built mainly on the three concepts of Freud – Id, Ego, and Super Ego. These mental states had different bearings to the individual, contributing to the whole and balanced psyche of the individual.

But while this whole interplay between the three mental states contributes to the entirety of our being, it is often the imbalance between them that complicates things. When one aspect dominates more over the other, it causes a number of problems for the individual.

For instance, a dominance of the Id may showcase repressed sexual traits in an inappropriate manner, dominating the psychological state of the individual. Ultimately, such an experience yields undeserved results, making it difficult for one to fully embrace the normal world from a normative state.

But of course, Freudian psychology is different from Jungian analytic psychology. Freud's ideas were mostly dominated by this precept that revolves around concepts of happiness and pleasure.



In his Psychosexual Theory of Development, we can see that Freud made use of one's sexuality as the coherent thread that ties together all the other aspects of one's transition in life. The transition from the oral phase to the phallic phase signals the uniqueness of understanding Freudian theory given that it is built on such sexually oriented concepts.

For Freud, one's sexuality heavily influences the kind of person that we are. An overexposure or a deprivation in one of these states can easily lead to a problematic adulthood, as the influences in our childhood can easily shape our biases in life.

But for Jung, this wasn't always necessarily the case. Freud have interpreted things strictly from this psychosexual theory, making it a bit exclusive. Jung presents to us a different viewpoint, one that is ignited by the same structure with a different interpretation.

In Jungian analytic psychology, an individual is understood from a three-fold mental state, but with a different interpretation. For Jung, the human psyche can be divided into three things – the conscious, personal unconscious, and collective unconscious. These three mental states form part of the ultimate understanding of one's individuality, influencing the kind of behaviors and responses before we know it.



As for the conscious aspect, Jung tells us that this is the part of the psyche where we are able to autonomously make decisions for ourselves. As conscious beings, we are able to form rational and sensible decisions on our own, independent from the influences and people around us.

But for Jung, such social and environmental influence should not be taken for granted. This is why he proposes that we also have two other mental states as mentioned above.

As for the personal unconscious state, we can consider it as an aspect of our selves where we receive and register information in our mind, but never fully process it. In such ambiguous state, it is difficult to understand everything for we lack that conscious control. Sometimes, these thoughts invade us even in our daily lives, making us make decisions that we haven't originally thought of.

Finally, as for the collective unconscious, Jung argues that we have ideas that are built-in within our human mind. Like DNA that is passed over from parents to children, the collective unconscious is the aspect of ourselves accounts for unexplainable symbols found in our dreams and visions in life. When we experience spiritual activities like lucid dreaming, universal symbols may come up due to this aspect of our being.



Thus, for Jung, understanding the human person entails not only having a better perspective about one's conscious state. Like Freud, Jung views the consciousness as simply the tip of the iceberg, with the rest of it being stored within. Having greater access to the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious signals a deeper understanding of the individual, one that allows us to tap onto the core of our being.

With this, Carl Jung presents to us numerous ways of understanding ourselves and symbols that we encounter in our journey as human beings. As part of his methods of investigation, Jung is most notably known for Active Imagination and Dream Analysis. These two different yet equally valuable methods will allow us to have a deeper understanding of ourselves, bringing into consciousness the repressed traits or unknown symbols that we encounter in our lives.



II. What is Active Imagination

As mentioned in the previous section, Active Imagination is a method of investigation that was first popularized by Carl Jung. Along his journey, Jung utilized this method in understanding his patients and even himself.

While not much has been discussed about this method, it is often described as “making conscious one’s fantasies”. In this case, most scholars and practitioners assume a more open approach in understanding this method by talking about how it seeks to simply unravel the unconscious.

Then, the contents of one’s unconscious is often translated into various forms, expressed mostly through art. By way of images, crafting, or even patterns, one is able to express these thoughts, concretely illustrating the ideas that were once locked up in the person’s unconscious.

As these unconscious fantasies are brought to light, the aim of active imagination is to try and grapple with them in one’s conscious state. Commonly suggested by practitioners and scholars of Jungian analytic psychology, Active Imagination is the act of picturing out an image and staring at it until it moves.



In this method, Jung suggests that by allowing the image to be, we are beginning to have a conversation with the unconscious. Meaning, by not trying to interpret the image based on what we know, or what we think we know, we allow it to express itself to us in a natural manner.

Consider for instance the case of a unicorn. If we base it from reality, a unicorn is considered a fictional animal given that there is no such thing as a horse with wings and a horn.

However, despite its impossibility and lack of proof for existence, the unicorn theme is a long-standing tradition which is common across various cultures. In Greek mythology, for instance, the unicorn is represented by Pegasus. In the same way, other western traditions also make mention of such fictional animal.

With this, we might be tempted to ask - why do we envision the unicorn? What is in the unicorn that bothers us or draws us in it?

Using other forms of investigation of leads to a rational explanation for this question. Perhaps, if we were to ask a rationalist, they would try to recall evidences or relevant experiences where such image made an impression to us. Maybe after watching that Disney film, we are reminded by the unicorn which seemed to have been stuck in our subconscious.



But while such can be true, it doesn't need to run in a different direction from the mystery of thoughts. That Disney film may have reminded us of the unicorn, but it is still our own psyche that chooses which information can become significant. After all, we absorb a lot of things in our day-to-day process, making it almost surely that if the subconscious decides to make everything conscious, we would end up hallucinating with the sheer amount of information contained in it.

If such is the case, why then were we drawn into by this unicorn image?

Jung suggests that Active Imagination can be one of the ways to answer this question. Following the method of Active imagination, we need not necessarily try to debunk this mystery using a rational approach.

Rather, Jung wants us to have a conversation with this image, allowing us to unravel its mysteries. By having a conversation instead of simply labeling it, we are able to understand more about the unconscious image.



III. The Basic Foundations of Active Imagination

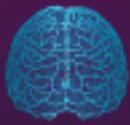
In the previous sections of this text, we've seen how Active Imagination can be a useful tool in trying to understand certain contexts of the psyche. Particularly in unconscious content, identifying these images will lead us to deeper understanding of ourselves.

But what allows Active Imagination to be? While it is a mere method of investigation, Active Imagination also has certain foundations and assumptions which makes the whole activity possible. Based on Jungian Analytic Psychology, this method utilizes contents from the unconscious mind.

In his theory, we can see that Jung understood the “unconscious” mind as either personal unconscious or collective unconscious.

While totally different, both aspects of the psyche can be an ultimate source of inspirations, ideas, and imaginations. Being part of the unconscious mind, we draw in our unexplained images from them.

Eventually, these images subtly influence our choices, marking one's preference over the others. As such, in this section, we'll be having a quick discussion on some of the basic assumptions that makes this plan of action a viable method.



a. Personal Unconscious

As one of the aspects of the psyche, the personal unconscious serves as a ground for repressed thoughts and ideas. As defined in Jess and Gregory Feist's Theories of Personality:

“The personal unconscious embraces all repressed, forgotten, or subliminally perceived experiences of one particular individual. It contains repressed infantile memories and impulses, forgotten events, and experiences originally perceived below the threshold of our consciousness. Our personal unconscious is formed by our individual experiences and is therefore unique to each of us. Some images in the personal unconscious can be recalled easily, some remembered with difficulty, and still others are beyond the reach of consciousness. Jung's concept of the personal unconscious differs little from Freud's view of the unconscious and preconscious combined (Jung, 1931/1960b)”

What this phrase means is that the personal unconscious is like a deeper aspect of the psyche where we store some of our repressed ideas, avoiding it from appearing in our consciousness.

In this case, the personal unconscious is often the grounds for concepts between the collective unconscious and consciousness itself. Meaning, it serves as a middle ground where we get to access some of our stored, repressed, or even subconsciously absorbed concepts, images or ideas.



As such, it serves as a foreground for Active Imagination.

The reason behind such is that active imagination draws in images that we may encounter subconsciously or even unconsciously. For instance, we may think of an image like a pointed steel ice pick.

For some unknown reason, this image keeps on bugging us and seeks to manifest itself. In this case, one reason why the ice pick becomes a significant image may be due to some trauma in childhood. Even before we are able to consciously remember, we may have had worse experiences with such artifact, marking its significance deep down in the personal unconscious.

In this case, Active Imagination may help by allowing us to communicate with the artifact, identifying where and what went wrong with it. By calmly looking at the image, it may begin to move or point somewhere, giving us an idea. It communicates itself, an artifact from our psyche.



b. Collective Unconscious

As the counterpart of Personal Unconscious, the collective unconscious also serves as a basic foundation for Active Imagination.

But unlike the personal unconscious, the collective unconscious separates itself by presenting it as an idea that made up of the summation of man's experience stored deep down in one's psyche.

As Feists have discussed in the abovementioned book, “the collective unconscious has roots in the ancestral past of the entire species. It represents Jung's most controversial, and perhaps his most distinctive, concept. The physical contents of the collective unconscious are inherited and pass from one generation to the next as psychic potential. Distant ancestors' experiences with universal concepts such as God, mother, water, earth, and so forth have been transmitted through the generations so that people in every clime and time have been influenced by their primitive ancestors' primordial experiences (Jung, 1937/1959). Therefore, the contents of the collective unconscious are more or less the same for people in all cultures (Jung, 1934/1959).”



This aspect of the psyche is most likely to affect us given its mysterious nature. While the personal unconscious seems to be the grounded on the totality of one's experience, the personal unconscious goes beyond that, giving man a perspective that is beyond his actual physical experiences in life.

Such is crucial in understanding man given that it presents to us the possibility of knowing something that we haven't encountered. By having an implanted idea in our heads, the collective unconscious allows for us to dream of primordial and archetypal symbols.

With this, universal symbols like the pendulum can easily spark interest within us. But we ask, why so? This universal artifact is an example of universal perpetual balance, a concept that is shared and being pursued since the beginning of man.

By way of Active Imagination, we may try to unravel the mystery behind the pendulum. As we look at it, we may see the image move, and may lead us to a number of mysteries and subliminal feelings emerging from within.

This is a sign that the image from the collective unconscious is reaching out to us, telling us something that we may not know of yet.



c. Ability of the Psyche to access these states

While the two unconscious states form part of the base from which we draw our own ideas, it has to be established that the psyche is capable of accessing these states.

More often than not, we fail to realize this power of the psyche given that we don't see that it is partially composed of the unconscious, making it irrelevant. For instance, as we pass by the street, we can see different signs which form part of our memory.

But because we fail to realize that our brain is able to access these sites, such information is often stored in the realm of the unconscious, making it inaccessible for us. Even so, when we try to recall them, to a certain extent, we may be able to access them.

In this case, one method to recall them would be Active Imagination. Given that it is a method of investigation, Active Imagination grants a way to access such states of mind, through our own psyche.

When we project something or think of something, we are able to recall certain symbols that made an impression to us. By simply following the image, it will move forward and point to us certain experiences that we may recall or may have missed.

With the power of the psyche, we can tap on both personal unconscious and collective unconscious states.



IV. Practical Guide: How to do Active Imagination

There are many ways to do Active Imagination. As a matter of fact, Jung would only be giving us a general description on how to do it. But as commonly understood among different scholars and practitioners, Active imagination is a process which feels like conscious dreaming.

Although not on lucid dreaming state, Active Imagination seeks to let go some of the light of consciousness to allow the unconscious to enter our realm. This gives access to the vastness of the information contained in it, making it easier to experience the symbols before us.

As such, the first step in doing Active Imagination is dreaming with eyes wide open. Jung writes:



“In the latter case you choose a dream, or some other fantasy-image, and concentrate on it by simply catching hold of it and looking at it. You can also use a bad mood as a starting-point, and then try to find out what sort of fantasy-image it will produce, or what image expresses this mood. You then fix this image in the mind by concentrating your attention. Usually it will alter, as the mere fact of contemplating it animates it. The alterations must be carefully noted down all the time, for they reflect the psychic processes in the unconscious background, which appear in the form of images consisting of conscious memory material. In this way conscious and unconscious are united, just as a waterfall connects above and below.” (Carl Jung: The Conjunction, CW 14, par. 706.)

The keyword here is identifying a fantasy-image, one that we can play with. Imagining this fantasy-image allows us to draw from the unconscious some parts or a whole of an idea, making it plausible for Active Imagination.

Followed through, we must use what's left in the light of consciousness to focus on this image, exposing ourselves to it and allowing it to take over us. No, we don't mean for it to possess us. Instead, what we want to happen is for it to speak and express itself before us.



As it speaks, the image moves. This is a natural transition that must happen in the whole scenario given that active imagination opens up the whole possibility of being. For instance, as we try to envision that tree in our backyard, the image may begin moving by slowly showing us flashes of various memories, communicating its significance to us.

In doing so, it is our task to take note of such changes, for it marks the unison between the conscious and the unconscious mind for us.

Furthermore, other scholars have noted that aside from vision, there are also other ways to do active imagination. As Daryl Sharp, M.A., citing Jung writes:

The second stage, beyond simply observing the images, involves a conscious participation in them, the honest evaluation of what they mean about oneself, and a morally and intellectually binding commitment to act on the insights. This is a transition from a merely perceptive or aesthetic attitude to one of judgment.



“Although, to a certain extent, he looks on from outside, impartially, he is also an acting and suffering figure in the drama of the psyche. This recognition is absolutely necessary and marks an important advance. So long as he simply looks at the pictures he is like the foolish Parsifal, who forgot to ask the vital question because he was not aware of his own participation in the action. [An allusion to the medieval Grail legend. The question Parsifal failed to ask was, "Whom does the Grail serve?"]. But if you recognize your own involvement you yourself must enter into the process with your personal reactions, just as if you were one of the fantasy figures, or rather, as if the drama being enacted before your eyes were real.” (“The Conjunction,” CW 14, par. 753.)

“The judging attitude implies a voluntary involvement in those fantasy-processes which compensate the individual and-in particular-the collective situation of consciousness. The avowed purpose of this involvement is to integrate the statements of the unconscious, to assimilate their compensatory content, and thereby produce a whole meaning which alone makes life worth living and, for not a few people, possible at all.” (Ibid., par. 756.)

The imagery of the Parsifal is one that we must be able to explain to fully understand Jung’s thought on Active Imagination.



Parsifal, a name which literally means “pure fool” is the story of a young boy who followed the Knight’s quest. However, before leaving, he decided to take with him a garment made by his mother, which in psychology means a mother complex.

In their quest for the holy grail and healing the Fisher King, the Parsifal eventually had to ask a question – “Whom does the grail serve?” Despite the help of his mentor Gournamond, Parsifal failed to ask this question because he heeded his mother’s advice of not asking too much questions.

In relation to Active Imagination and Jung’s point, his idea is that sometimes, when we participate in such activities, we must never forget that we are part of it instead of being a mere spectator. In doing active imagination, we ourselves are engaging.

He further emphasizes the nature of our task in the whole process by pointing out that we need to have that judging attitude, something that will allow us to have a deeper connection to the whole activity, making the unconscious a part of us.

In both accounts of trying to understand the whole process of Active Imagination, we can say that Jung wasn’t really extra specific on how to do it. By being able to simply allow ourselves to have a communication with the image, we are already doing the whole process of it.



In this case, what we need to take note of are the pointers as presented above. Jung tells us that it is important to be part of the moment, instead of being a distant observer of the moving image. This makes sure that our conscious self is attuned with the unconscious one, making it possible to have a marriage between two worlds for a brief span of time.

This opens up an endless well of meanings, rich with its symbolism and mysticism. In this case, our task is to make sure that during this momentary eclipse we are able to take note of the whole process.

With the sheer level of complexity involved in this process, we'll be breaking it down to a few simple steps that we can use in order to make things easier for us.



1. Create the mood

In accessing our unconscious states, it is important to take note that we can only do this by properly preparing ourselves. Meaning, we'll always fail in trying to access this state whenever we are engrossed on something else or are tied to on our daily routine.

Before beginning, make sure that you are in a quiet and secluded place. Even the slightest of distractions can easily ruin all our efforts in pursuing what the unconscious has to say. Also, we have to make the place (a room perhaps) clean and free from other distractions, making it easier for us to focus on the image that we need to. If necessary, we may use other accessories such as oil-based air purifier to create the perfect mood for us.

After such, it is imperative for us to prepare and set the mood before anything else. Common to other ways of practicing spirituality, we must prepare ourselves physically by emptying our minds with any other thoughts that we may have unless such is used to help in the whole process of Active Imagination.

Preparing the environment and one's body ensures that inner and outer factors are taken care of, making it conducive for the whole experience of active imagination.



2. The Visual Method

In doing active imagination, we can employ two ways – the visual and the oral method. As the first method, the visual method is the way of recalling some illustration of the image which allows us to internalize and journey with it.

Begin by closing one's eyes, and try to recall as hard as you can that dream or the symbol in it. Note that in doing so, even if you are here to try your best, do not force the image to come out. Instead, you have to wait calmly but never give up on the whole process of recalling it.

When you already have the image, continue by letting it unfold. If your eyes are closed, remain as such for you need not use the bodily organ to see the content of the unconscious. Rather, what you need to do is once the image is there in your mind, let it flow through you like a river.

In proceeding, the image may take you anywhere or it may change its ways or actions. Be careful in doing this, make sure that you are walking slowly and calmly, allowing the unconscious to guide you through the whole journey instead of you guiding it.

But because you are awake in the whole exercise, it makes a whole lot of difference given that you will be able to remember fully all these symbolisms and imagery shown to you by the unconscious.



ACTIVE IMAGINATION GUIDE

As stated in the general description, make sure to take notes of these symbols and images, making the activity truly a part of the conscious mind.





3. The Oral Method

Another effective method in doing Active Imagination is also through talking or communicating. Aside from simply trying to envision, we can deepen this experience when we are able to engage with the image or with another person who may help us in the whole engagement.

As such, there are three ways suggested to do this approach.

First, you may begin by simply talking out loud. While no one may be there to hear you, the action of talking makes it easier for you to experience the whole process instead of simply keeping it to yourself.

Second, you may also continue this quest by talking to yourself. This means that you may allow yourself to channel the ideas of the unconscious. By writing both ends of the dialogue, you allow the power of the unconscious to flow through your words.

Third, you may also talk to another partner. This partner need not be necessarily trained but it is of course better if they have experience in doing the whole process. With their help, it may bring out new interpretations or further applications of the same image.



ACTIVE IMAGINATION GUIDE

What is constant in this whole exercise is allowing your inner self to speak instead of you simply dictating where the conversation goes. Meaning, there is a surrender that can happen, allowing it to take over certain parts of the whole activity. This gives them some spot light, exposing contents and symbols through words.

With both pointers, we may now proceed in the actual undertaking with an idea of how to proceed instead of randomly figuring out for ourselves.



V. Experiencing the Unconscious

After knowing how to perform Active Imagination, we proceed by giving you an idea of the possible experience and the various feelings that may occur as you proceed in the whole exercise.

Sometimes, when people engage in Active Imagination they may not be as prepared as they thought they'd be. After all, they are facing something mysterious and divine, something that goes beyond the realm of everyday life.

In this case, we will be presenting some tips and ideas on what's there to come, so as to give our readers a gauge of their own experiences.



1. Even Jung himself had a great deal of struggle in doing this exercise

As a pioneer of this now famous method, even Carl Jung himself had his share of difficulties in doing Active Imagination. Out of all the psychologists, Jung is known to be the one who is most associated to the concept of the unconscious and the mystic, to an extent that he perceived hallucinations as normal occurrences in his own life.

And so, Jung writes, “one of the greatest difficulties for me lay in dealing with my negative feelings. I was voluntarily submitting myself to emotions of which I could not really approve, and I was writing down fantasies which often struck me as nonsense, and toward which I had strong resistances.” (C.G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*)

In this example of Jung, we can see that his struggle was primarily brought about by feelings, interpretations, and notions that he could not approve or understand.

The nature of the unconscious in itself is already a complex existence, even when we're merely speaking about the personal unconscious. Unraveling them means that we might find repressed thoughts which we would find difficult to accept or even process at all.



ACTIVE IMAGINATION GUIDE

For instance, in doing active imagination, an image of a clown may come out. While kids are usually happy to see a clown, some are terrified and have negative associations with this image. Even so, when doing active imagination, we have to bear the slow torment brought about by this image, making it difficult for us to even process it as fear may easily overrun our thoughts.

But even so, this points out to the concept that in doing active imagination, we must completely open ourselves up, for it is one of the most efficient paths to walk with the unconscious. As some would put it, doing active imagination requires walking on a tight rope which can easily cause us to fall. However, we must not waver. Rather, we need to remain steadfast in this possibly long unpleasant ride.



2. The results of Active Imagination may challenge the very foundation of our values

Unlike other methods of investigation, active imagination seeks to let the unconscious speak to us. And as we've known above, this experience doesn't always lead to the best of situations, rather, may easily lead us to a worsened situation.

As certain symbols and ideas are flashing before our eyes, they may seem irrelevant and not that important at all. However, some striking images can easily change our outlook about life, just like how the unconscious influences the conscious choices that we make.

With this, a relevant concept to be taken into account is Jung's idea of the shadow. While the shadow resides on the personal unconscious, it contains repressed thoughts or ideas about ourselves and about others. These ideas can easily manifest in us, even in times that we don't know about.

For instance, we may have a repression about the opposite sex as being wrong or inappropriate. In this case, the conscious mind may express this idea, often labeling the other sex as the weaker one. However, given that the other sex is repressed within us, it may constantly form a shadow, slowly creeping into our own conscious mind.



In this case, active imagination may influence this problem by presenting to us an image that strongly resonates with the opposite sex. A princess, for instance, may seem to be a harmless image which reminds us of a female archetype. However, as this image moves, it may bring us to other images which can lead us to challenge our values. A brave princess that tramples on men may easily change our conscious thoughts about women.

With this emergence, it slowly challenges the kind of values that we have and the way we see others in general. As such, it can be difficult for us to move forward given that we may easily have a tainted image about women, simply because we have allowed ourselves to give in during this exercise.

This danger is something that must be taken seriously when doing Active Imagination. Much like other spiritual practices, this one can take over and cause problems in our psyche. Sometimes, due to the images presented, we can question the reality before us, being unable to determine which is real and which is not.

Thus, before engaging in this activity, one must have careful consideration of its possible repercussions and if he/she is ready for it.



3. You may begin hearing inner voices – and that's not necessarily cool

Perhaps, of the tips mentioned here, this one is the eeriest and strangest. Dealing with active imagination opens yourself up to the various energies that may be present in your encounter.

In some accounts, the unconscious may be experienced to speak as if having a Godly tone in it, making it strange to say the least. This experience of the unconscious can easily overpower us. As Jung writes:

“Archetypes speak the language of high rhetoric, even of bombast. It is a style I find embarrassing; it grates on my nerves, as when someone draws his nails down a plaster wall, or scrapes his knife against a plate.” (C.G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*)

Archetypes here represent the unconscious, the vastness of human experience that is embedded in us. These archetypes that can be accessed through the collective unconscious can provide us with such vast experience that it can easily overpower us, and eventually control our actions by stealing the spotlight of consciousness.

We can say that Jung has truly experienced this unconscious state and its vastness given that there were accounts which pointed out how Jung was suffering from lack of conscious control for about three years of his life.



This experience shows that even he himself who submits to the unconscious can easily go mentally unstable. How much more for us?

Just imagine dealing with Active Imagination to a point wherein we will be hearing voices in our head. That alone can easily make it a problematic experience for us.

This tip serves more of a warning that when we engage in active imagination, we will always submit ourselves to some greater power deep within us. It is only but natural to hear such voices for they are part and parcel of the whole experience of the unconscious state, a proof that we truly are opening ourselves.

Thus, sometimes, doing active imagination is better with someone like a trained professional. In this way, our partner will ensure that we are on track in reality even when we're swimming in the unconscious states.



VI. Final Word

In understanding the value of Active Imagination, it is essential for us to see that this technique will help us understand more about the world. As we open ourselves to the unconscious that is within us, we hope to unlock meaning that can be present in the things that we are doing.

As we go through the whole process, we get to unravel certain symbols and imagery which may first appear strange and mystical to us. Despite such, we should remember that these symbols are of value, given that each of them speaks something that can help us understand more about the world.

The key is in knowing that dealing with the unconscious requires that we give up some light of consciousness in us. This is the most crucial part because by knowing that such is the case, we can be truly prepared and ready to face its unfathomable vastness.

As we allow the collective or personal unconscious to enter us, our task is to record this experience while trying our best to avoid influencing it. After all, in doing Active Imagination, the conscious self is still active and may easily scare away or change the meaning of the symbols appearing before us.



But while such is true, the challenge is also in maintaining that balance in order not to become fully conquered by the unconscious. In some instances, Carl Jung himself was recorded to have hallucinations which he eventually considered as something that is somehow normal.

Yet of course, we are not Carl Jung himself so we must be wary of the negative effects of such levels of active imagination. In doing so, we can be somehow both in and out of control.

Active imagination is a great method of investigation, as long as we are able to do it properly. Unlike Dream Analysis, it is far more complex and mysterious in its approach, which also means that it can almost surely yield more results.

As Jung notes, by engaging in active imagination, we are able to truly dive into the experience – for all its meaning and value that can be unraveled.