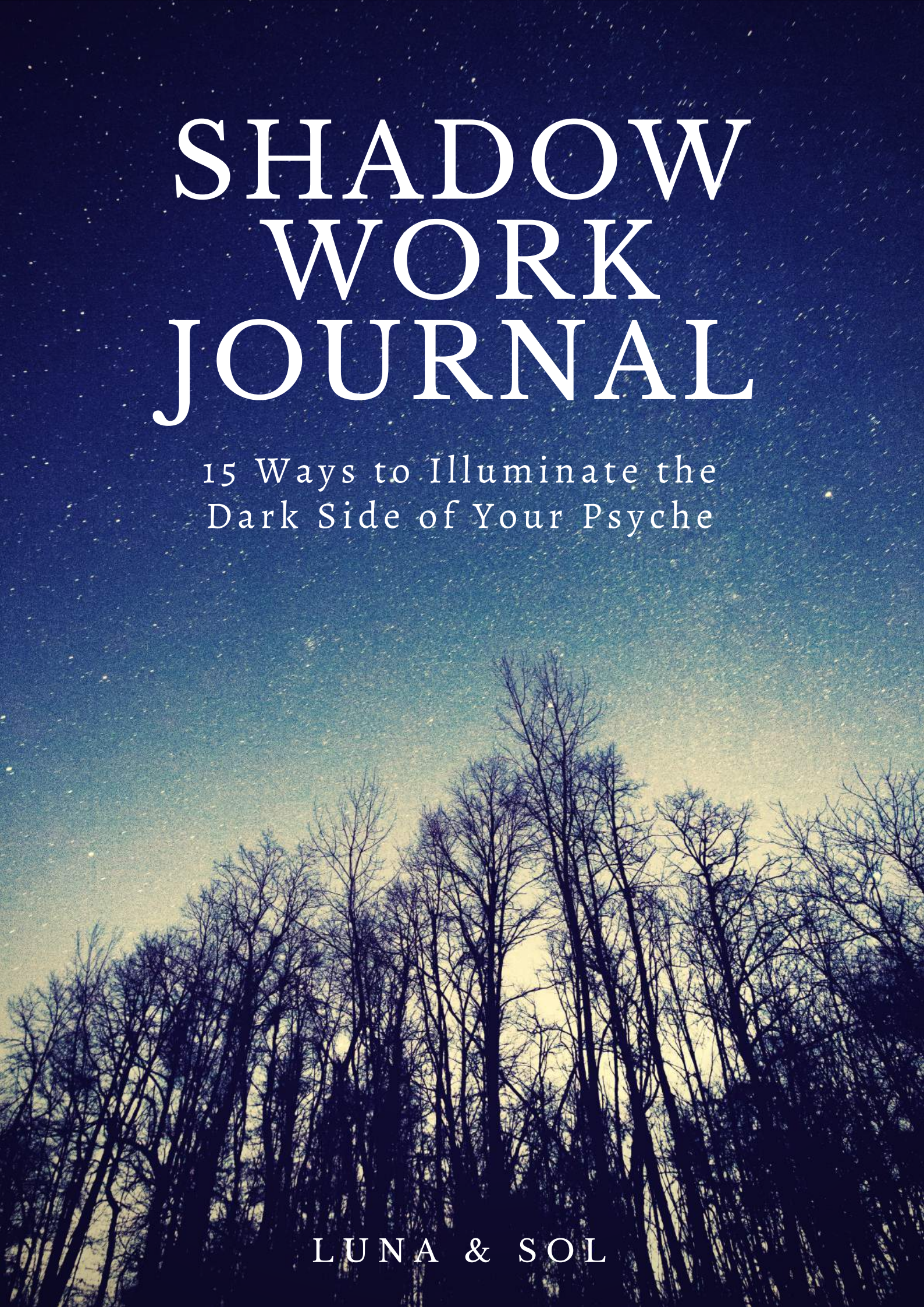
SHADOW WORK JOURNAL

15 Ways to Illuminate the Dark Side of Your Psyche



LUNA & SOL

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Introduction

We are all part angel and part devil inside. This is a fact of life that we must face and embrace.

As spiritual beings having a human experience we have developed two faces. The first face we show to the world – this facade is called the ego. The second face we keep private – it is called the shadow. In fact, our shadow selves are so private that usually we are not even *aware* of their existence. We only glimpse them during fits of rage, nightmares, pettiness, revenge, paranoid thoughts, drug and sex binges, and anything that verges on the edge of "insane" behavior.

There is a good reason why our shadows remain anonymous and locked away within the dark depths of our minds. Our shadows contain everything that is considered ugly, "bad," shameful, weird, taboo or socially unacceptable. Our shadows contain the parts of us that have been shunned, denied, rejected or otherwise negatively condemned by our parents, family members, and societies growing up. In order to be loved and accepted, we learned as children to hide away those parts of ourselves that were not met with praise and approval, and adopt only those traits and behaviors that were met with open arms. Cutting off and burying certain parts of ourselves was a necessary part of our survival.

But there is one very significant downside to repressing parts of ourselves: they begin to fester and amplify, sabotaging our lives. Like hungry monsters clawing to get out of a dark basement, our shadows *want* to be brought into the light of consciousness. The longer we put off facing our shadows, the more they stealthily control and manipulate our lives. Like puppets on strings, we become vulnerable to the control of our shadows in moments of anger, stress, temptation or tiredness. Instead of learning to meet, acknowledge, and befriend our shadows, they become our mortal enemies. If you have ever felt at war with yourself or like you are your own *worst enemy*, it is because your shadows are controlling you, not the other way around.

This Shadow Work Journal has been created for the purposes of helping you to bring an illuminating torch into the mysterious and dark regions of your unconscious mind.

We all have skeletons hiding in the closet and monsters lurking in the abyss of our psyches. We all have nasty tendencies and childhood wounds that haven't been faced and acknowledged. We all have repressed anger and unacknowledged greatness buried deep inside.

Shadow work is the practice of exploring everything that is locked away in the vault of your unconscious.

In this journal, you will find a series of simple but powerful questions and exercises which will help to shine a light on the shadowy areas of your life that you might be unaware of.

As shadow work should always be preceded by and/or incorporated with self-love, you will find some self-love activities within this journal as well. *Shadow work is an extremely deep form of inner work and should not be taken lightly.* If you struggle with low self-esteem, I encourage you to focus on the self-love aspects of this journal instead. If at any time you feel intensely uncomfortable or disturbed by any shadow work activities within this journal, please stop immediately and practice self-love. Without self-love, shadow work can easily make you feel a million times worse about yourself. And we don't want that! So always strive to incorporate self-care and nurturing self-compassion into any shadow work activity that you do.

You can progress as slowly or as fast as you want through this journal. Don't feel the need to rush and complete all the questions and activities at once unless you feel called to do that. It's perfectly fine to take your time. Also, don't feel the need to write long and winding responses, unless of course, you feel the necessity. Even just a few words or sentences is sufficient. You can always add to your insights and reflections later. If conventional sentences don't come naturally, you can always choose to write a poem or draw a picture of how you feel. Do whatever helps *you* the most. If you run out of paper, you can always begin writing on the back or staple extra sheets of paper to the end.

Finally, I encourage you to print out this journal or copy the activities into your *own* journal if that suits you better. You're welcome to print out this journal as many times as you want or need throughout the course of your journey of self-growth and spiritual development. Doing so will help you to reflect on your shadow work progress and note new interesting discoveries. Ensure that you save this file somewhere on your phone,

tablet or desktop for future reference. Also, ensure this journal remains private, meaning that you might wish to keep it away from prying eyes.

Why is it worth the effort of completing these journaling prompts? Writing down your thoughts gives you a visual and tangible way of exploring your shadow self. Simply thinking about shadow work doesn't do enough or create as much change as actively recording your insights. Our brains are fallible, and reflections, as well as discoveries, can easily be forgotten. Not only that but recording your thoughts and feelings also gives you a point of reference to revisit in the future. Many deep lessons and epiphanies can be integrated more deeply when referring back to them in physical form.

Finally, take a few moments to appreciate yourself! You are about to undertake something that requires deep courage and commitment. Exploring your demons with a kind and open heart is no small feat! Dedicating time to this practice is a form of self-love. Doing shadow work is a sacred gift that you are giving to yourself and *everyone* around you. When you learn to accept all parts of you, you are sending out ripples of change into the world. You might not immediately see it, but keeping a shadow work journal creates a butterfly effect on this planet that impacts countless of other people through your actions. Be proud of yourself for choosing to walk this path! You deserve it.

Our hope is that this journal facilitates deep insight.
May this journal help to illuminate the dark side of your psyche.

With love, *Luna & Sol*

Exercise 1 - Playing Small

In what areas of life are you holding back and playing small? (Think about the times you feel weak, small or disempowered.) Write them below and next to each explore why.

Exercise 2 - Self-Judgment

In what ways do you feel judged by others? Write them below. Explore how many of these judgments might actually originate within *you* first (and are displaced onto others).

Exercise 3 - Negatives and Positives

What negatives or positives do others point out about you that you have trouble accepting?

One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious.

– Carl Jung

Exercise 4 - Emotional Suppression

What emotions do you rarely express around others – and when did you *first start* hiding these emotions from others? (Emotional suppression and repression often point to areas of shame buried within you.)

Exercise 5 - Self-Love Letter

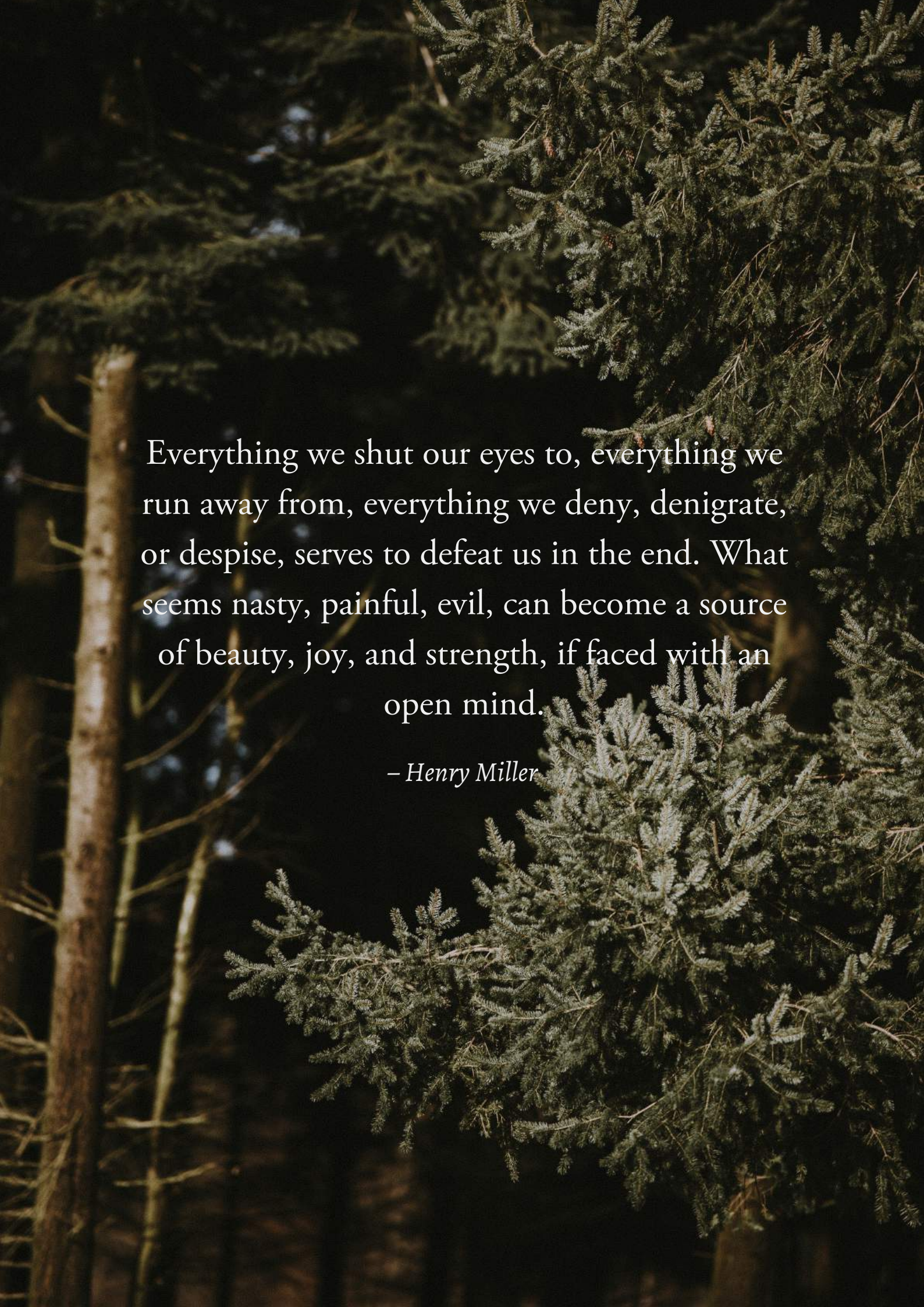
Reflect on a period of life where you were at your worst (i.e. most self-destructive, argumentative, etc.). Write a short, but heartfelt letter of understanding, acceptance, and compassion for that version of you. You can return to this letter later whenever you feel rotten about yourself.

Exercise 6 - Hot Buttons

What are your “hot buttons” or triggers that cause you to get angry or defensive in the presence of others?

Exercise 7 - Family Members

What qualities in your family members do you most dislike or have trouble dealing with? What might these qualities in your loved ones secretly reveal about you?



Everything we shut our eyes to, everything we run away from, everything we deny, denigrate, or despise, serves to defeat us in the end. What seems nasty, painful, evil, can become a source of beauty, joy, and strength, if faced with an open mind.

– Henry Miller

Exercise 8 - Tolerance of Beliefs

In which areas of life do you tend to expect others to conform to *your* beliefs? (Also, what scares you the most about allowing others to have their own beliefs in that area?)

Exercise 9 - Self-Criticism

When are you the most critical of yourself? Explore what your self-talk sounds like below.

Exercise 10 - Self-Love and Gratitude

Describe five things you love about yourself and feel gratitude about. (Gratitude has been scientifically proven to enhance your happiness and wellbeing – these are important qualities to carry into shadow work.)

Our shadows aren't just dark, wild or savage – they also contain many hidden diamonds, sapphires, and pearls. In fact, the shadow is often a goldmine full of hidden gifts and potentials that we lost touch with as children. For example, many people discover artistic talents, latent strengths (such as assertiveness and passion), and even spiritual gifts such as empathic sensitivity, open-mindedness, and compassion within their shadows. The point of shadow work is to get in touch with all sides of ourselves, embrace our wildness, embody our sacredness, and reconnect with our innate Wholeness. By keeping a shadow work journal, you are taking small steps towards a more integrated life.

Exercise 11 - Secrecy

What parts of you do you keep hidden from your friends and loved ones? Explore why below.

Exercise 12 - The Victim

Explore how you play out the following role in real life:

The Victim (Other names: *slave*, *martyr*) Victimhood allows us to acknowledge our woundedness, but when we get bogged down in it, it can cripple us. The biggest problem that the inner Victim brings to our lives is disowned personal power. When we don't take responsibility for our prosperity, bliss, and contentment, our lives seem like a never-ending stream of misery – it can feel as though *life is against us.*

How does the Victim show up in you? Record your reflections below.

Exercise 13 - Biggest Fear

What do you fear losing the most? Explore below. How does your biggest fear influence your decisions, habits, outlook or relationships?

When shadow-work is neglected, the soul feels dry, brittle, like an empty vessel. Then, people suffer depression rather than embark on a fruitful descent. When shadow-work is denied, the soul feels banished, exiled from its habitats in the wilds of nature ... But when shadow-work is attended to, the soul feels round, full, sated. When shadow-work is invited into a life, the soul feels welcomed, alive in the gardens, aroused in passion, awake in sacred things.

– C. Zweig & S. Wolf

Exercise 14 - Shadow Desires

Think about something you really want or desire. Write the main reason you want/desire this person, quality, experience, achievement, or material possession. Now, think about any shadow motivations you might have that come from your own unmet needs.

Exercise 15 - Egocentricity

In what areas of life are you egocentric, i.e. the world revolves around *you* and *your* needs? Be honest with yourself. Explore below.

Exercise 16 - Sexuality

What areas of sex and sexuality cause you to feel embarrassment, shame, disgust or inadequacy? Why?

Exercise 17 - Shadow Letter

Give your shadow self a voice. Sit somewhere quiet and focus on your breath for a few minutes. When you are ready, light a candle, mentally envision a circle of protection around you, and tune into your inner 'dark voice.' If it helps you to feel more comfortable and protected, you may like to call on any higher force you believe in to support you such as Spirit, Soul, God, Goddess, your Spirit Guides or your Higher Self. Once you feel grounded and supported, ask out loud or in your mind, "Dear Shadow, please express yourself to me. What would you like to tell me?" I recommend keeping a few loving affirmations ready, just in case you need to use them to counteract any overwhelming negativity you may experience. Write whatever comes to mind during your shadow journaling and *don't censor any of it*! Let it all come out naturally, no matter how scrambled, cryptic, disturbing or explicit it is – it's your *shadow* self, remember! When you feel done, blow out the candle, and take a few moments to connect with your heart. How do you feel? Repeat your loving self-affirmations with heartfelt sincerity. Reflect on what your shadow has expressed to you. What words, concepts or feelings jump out? These will be essential to reflect on and revisit regularly.

Other Thoughts & Reflections

Use this space to record any spontaneous insights or discoveries you've had about your shadow self while working through this journal.

Like this free journal?
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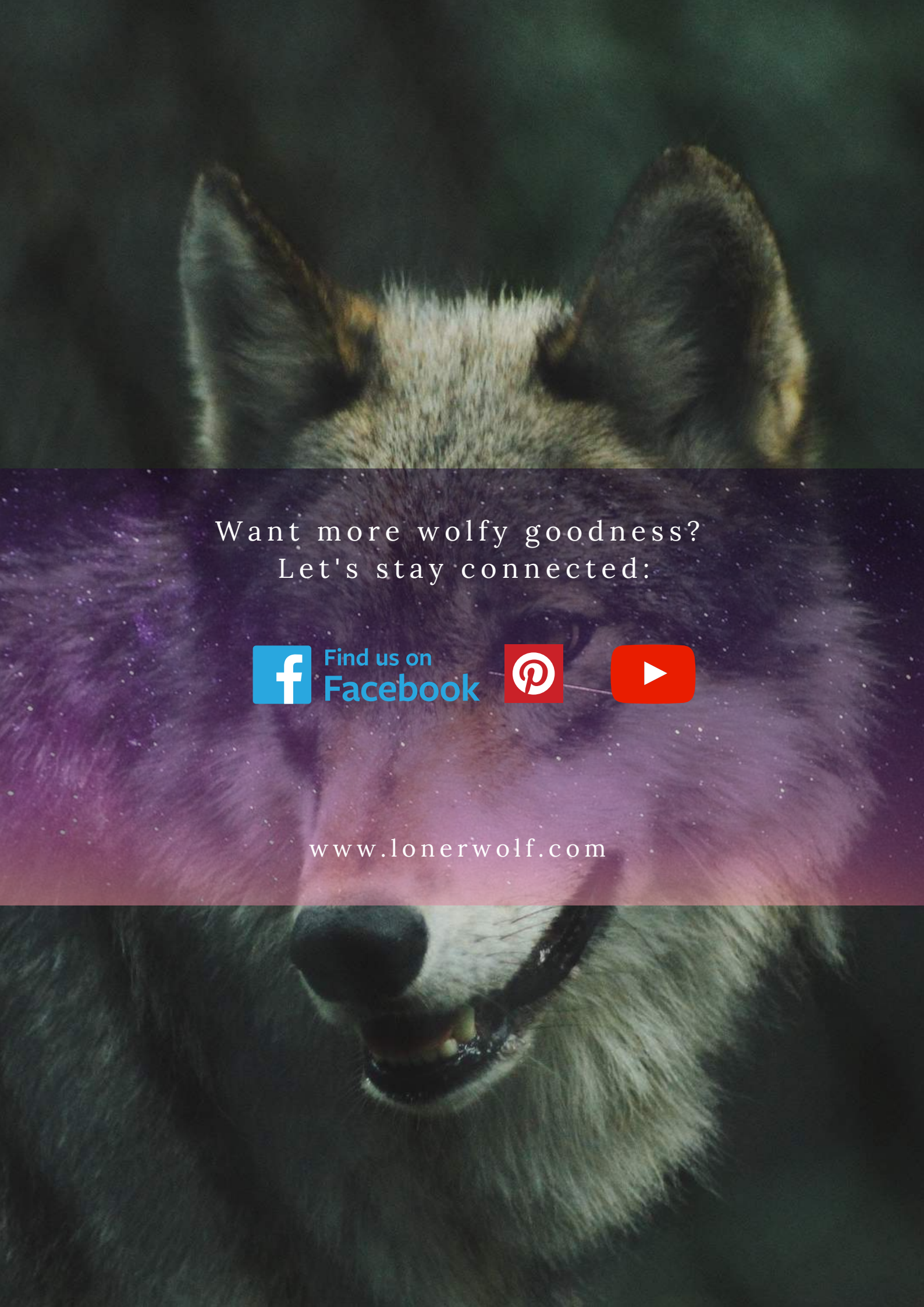
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