

## Survival Archetypes and “The Wizard of Oz”

The film “*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*” is a prime example of the hero’s journey through each of the four survival archetypes: *the Child*, *the Victim*, *the Prostitute*, and *the Saboteur*. This film is a rich archetypal treasure trove.



The first character that we meet in the film is **Dorothy – the Child**. She looks for attention and is struggling to be heard and recognized by the adults (*the Child* represents the tension between seeking self-authority, responsibility and innocence). Dorothy longs for a place “*somewhere over the rainbow*” where she can have both authority and innocence – that is to say, a home of her own. **The Child is the guardian of innocence and is the part of us that both wants and shuns responsibility and protection.** Her hero’s journey begins when she is whisked out of Kansas by a tornado (chaos) and is taken to Oz where she finds new friends who will aid her on her journey back home.



After being recognized as *the Hero* by the Munchkins for doing away with the Wicked Witch of the East, she asks how to get home and is told that she needs to go ask the Wizard in the Emerald City for help. And so with a gift of ruby slippers on her feet, Dorothy starts out on the yellow brick road and happens upon the Scarecrow, her first ally on the journey.

The **Scarecrow – the Saboteur**, points in one direction and then another because he can't make up his mind. He is stuck on a pole and announces that he is a failure because he hasn't got a brain. The Scarecrow sings about all the things he would do 'if only' he had a brain. This is the dark side of *the Saboteur*. **The Saboteur is the guardian of self-esteem and choice. It represents both the voice in ourselves that sees things as confusion, lacking or regret, while also being the voice that sees the attributes, resources and abilities available to overcome difficulties.** In this sense *the Saboteur* is both our best ally and worst critic depending on what side is dominant (the dark side or light). You'll see throughout the film the Scarecrow claiming he isn't smart (dark side) and then using his intelligence (light side) to help Dorothy and the others succeed in their quest.



Next our heroes meet the **Tin Man – the Prostitute**. He is standing alone, frozen and unable to speak in the forest. With the aid of Dorothy and the Scarecrow his joints are oiled (is given attention and love) and he can once again move and speak. The Tin Man's complaint is that he hasn't got a heart and sings about how loving he would be if he had one. He could then love freely without becoming frozen in fear. The heart here is symbolic of his faith in himself. **The Prostitute archetype represents our internal negotiator, our guardian of faith and integrity. Like the Tin Man we can become frozen in fear when we feel our survival is threatened and will negotiate a price for ourselves to feel safe again.** When Dorothy asks the Tin Man to join them he asks "suppose I got there and he wouldn't give me a heart?" – Another question of faith.



The **Cowardly Lion** represents the final survival archetype – **The Victim**. He claims that he has no courage and is therefore always the Victim (shadow). He is tormented by his fears and even scares himself. He complains about how unbearable life has been (seeking pity – shadow) and wants the Wizard to give him courage so he could be victorious (light). Later in the film he sings about how he would be transformed into a gracious and compassionate King (light) once he gets some courage.

Each of these characters is on a quest to get what they perceive as lacking in their character. They ask the Wizard of Oz to grant them what they need and must face their fears and overcome obstacles on their way to meet him. Each of these fears and obstacles are conquered using the exact thing that each of them believes they are lacking. Only when they discover the Wizard to be a fraud do they begin to realize that they had what they were seeking all along.

Being gracious though, they accept the blessing of the Wizard along with the symbols of their quest; a medal for courage (*empowerment and self-esteem*), a scroll for intelligence (*choice and esteem*), and a heart shaped pin for love (*faith and integrity*). Dorothy was carrying her symbol, the ruby slippers, the entire time and thus had the ability to get home all along (*self-authority*).