



# **SELF-DISCOVERY THE JUNGIAN WAY**

**The Watchword  
Technique**

***FREE  
EXTRACT***

**MICHAEL DANIELS**



# Self-discovery the Jungian way

Clearly and entertainingly written, *Self-discovery the Jungian way* presents an exciting new technique of self-analysis. Based on the psychological theories of C.G. Jung, the 'Watchword' technique will enable you to identify your psychological type and to explore the structure and dynamics of your personality. As you learn to recognize the various forces and tendencies within the psyche, you will acquire greater understanding of your inner self and your personal relationships.

This practical method of self-exploration guides you systematically along the difficult path towards the ultimate goal of self-realization or *individuation*. It uses a structured form of word association which you assess and interpret yourself, following simple guidelines that require no numerical scoring.

Easy to understand and fun to use, the book makes an intriguing and useful introductory guide to Jungian analytical psychology. It will appeal to a wide range of readers, including professional psychologists and students of psychology, counsellors and psychotherapists, as well as anyone interested in self-exploration and personal growth.

**Michael Daniels PhD** is a chartered psychologist with a longstanding interest in Jungian psychology, self-actualization, transpersonal psychology and psychical research. Now retired, he was formerly Senior Lecturer in Psychology and Co-director of the *Consciousness and Transpersonal Psychology Research Unit* at Liverpool John Moores University. He also trained and practised for six years as an honorary psychotherapist (psychodynamic) within the National Health Service. He is the author of more than 30 academic articles and chapters, and of *Shadow, Self, Spirit: Essays in Transpersonal Psychology* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2005). From 2007-2013 he was Editor of *Transpersonal Psychology Review* (Journal of the British Psychological Society Transpersonal Psychology Section).



# **Self-discovery the Jungian way**

The Watchword technique

**Michael Daniels**

## *For my family*

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Self-discovery the Jungian way: The Watchword technique

# Contents

<i>List of tables and figures</i>	<i>vi</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>xii</i>
<b>1 Towards self-knowledge</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 The Watchword technique</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3 Rationale and structure</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>4 The Watchword keys</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>5 Psychological types</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>6 The interpretive process</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>7 An example of self-analysis</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>8 Analysing change</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>9 Final thoughts</b>	<b>137</b>
<i>Appendix: blank matrix forms</i>	<b>142</b>
<i>Bibliography</i>	<b>153</b>
<i>Name index</i>	<b>156</b>
<i>Subject index</i>	<b>157</b>

# Tables and figures

## TABLES

1.	The Watchword connections	11
2.	The six stages of the psychological journey	16
3.	The symbolism of up and down	19
4.	The symbolism of left and right	25
5.	Key principles and psychological indications	33
6.	The sixteen Jungian psychological types	58
7.	Theoretical correspondences between Watchword types and MBTI® types	92
8.	Examples of word amplifications	98
9.	Key interpretations for Matrix 39 (Rachel)	99-100
10.	The seven dialectical relationships	101
11.	Stage 3: Word associations (Author, 1984)	114-15

## FIGURES

1.	Sequence of words and associations	10
2.	The six levels of word association	15
3.	Simple graphic symbols	18
4.	The Greek cross	29
5.	The cross of self-realization	29
6.	The Watchword keys	31
7.	The principal dimensions	31
8.	Dimensional combinations	32
9.	The balance/tension of inner and outer	32
10.	The balance/tension of progression and regression	32
11.	The final resolution	32
12.	The functions of consciousness	55
13.	The eight function types	56
14.	The three developmental relationships	103
15.	Comparison of the developmental models of Watchword and Jung	108



# Preface

## Preface to the first edition (1992)

This book has been written with certain misgivings. Not least of these is the thought that surely we have enough publications already in the high street that claim to offer guidance for people seeking self-development, enlightenment, fulfilment, self-actualization, well-being, positive mental health, perfection, happiness, or whatever is the currently fashionable label for such things.

If the evidence in the bookshops is anything to go by, then there is no doubt – the ‘New Age’ is upon us with a vengeance and we run the very real risk of drowning in the flood of alternative literature. No longer is self-discovery the preserve of the philosopher, psychologist, religious initiate or eccentric amateur. In their own fashion, large numbers of quite ordinary people are expressing an extraordinary appetite for information and guidance in such matters. As a result, there has developed a ready, ever-expanding market for every conceivable interest and taste, from astrology to Zen Buddhism – and within each of these areas enough material, it would seem, to keep anyone busy for a lifetime.

Many people who have tried the *Watchword* technique have told me, however, that this is something not only quite new to them but, more importantly, both practical and accessible to the layperson who has no specialist knowledge of systems of self-development. Even those who at first do not learn much from the method generally find it interesting and intriguing, and they are often all too eager to try it out again – on their friends and acquaintances, as well as themselves. I have known occasions when the technique has travelled through a network of people and groups with the manner and speed of an infection. Consequently, I have been surprised on several occasions by strangers telling me that they have ‘done’ the exercise before.

Until now, although I have explained the basic technique and system to students, friends and others I have taught personally, no complete formal exposition of the method has been available. As a result, many have gone away either muddled or failing to understand fully the complexities of the system. This, I believe, has been a particular problem when the technique has been learned second-hand or at some further remove. For this reason,

although I do not feel completely ready to go into print at this stage and would prefer the opportunity for further research, it is important that the basic system should be published now. In this way inaccuracies that might have arisen can be corrected immediately. This book is also a direct response to numerous requests I have received to write a simple yet detailed explanation of the Watchword system, together with a set of clear guidelines for the individual who wishes to use the technique and yet does not have the benefit of personal tuition.

Watchword has been described to me by one reviewer as a ‘firmly orthodox Jungian technique’, a description that I am happy and proud to endorse yet which, I feel, needs some explanation. Let me say at the outset that I am not a Jungian analyst. Although I have been interested in Carl Jung’s analytical psychology since my early days as an undergraduate and have in recent years taught his system to many groups of students, I never viewed myself as a true ‘Jungian’ until I began to work with Watchword. My earlier interest and research in the concept of self-actualization approached this topic from the perspective of humanistic, developmental and existential psychology (e.g., Daniels, 1982, 1984, 1988). While I was aware of and fascinated by Jung’s ideas, I always found his theories to be rather abstruse and difficult to apply to everyday life and experience.

Developing the Watchword system has involved me in a strange, almost mysterious process of intellectual discovery – even, I am tempted to say, revelation. As I studied and pondered the technique, I seemed to be drawn inexorably closer and closer towards a Jungian formulation. Time and again I found myself gazing disbelievingly at a quite unanticipated yet undeniable parallel between what my studies and research were revealing and some important element within Jung’s theoretical approach. Of course my thinking must have been influenced by my prior reading of Jung, but this influence was essentially uncontrived. To give but one example: it was some considerable time after I had realized the basic structure of the Watchword matrix and related this to Jung’s description of the process of *individuation* (in fact I had already begun preparing this book) that I suddenly saw his theory of psychological types staring up at me from the matrices I was then examining.

I say all this not to be inscrutable nor to tantalize the reader but to make quite clear that I did not start out with the intention of devising a specifically Jungian technique. In many respects I am as surprised as the next person may be that Watchword has turned out this way. It confirms in my mind, however, that there is something essentially true and basic in Jung’s psychology.

Watchword is a practical technique that is designed to be used. In this regard it is one of the very few Jungian-based methods available either to professionals or to the general public for exploring an individual’s psychological experience. In writing this book in as non-technical and relevant a way as I am able, it is my hope that Jungian psychology may

become more widely known, understood, respected and, above all, employed. In addition to its primary use as a means by which any person may approach the task of self-exploration, Watchword will also be of particular interest to Jungian analysts as well as to a wide range of therapists, counsellors and others who work with clients or peers in the general area of psychological health or personal growth.

This brief explanation will make clear that Watchword should not be viewed as having achieved a final state of development. Additional research is indicated and new discoveries may be anticipated. In offering Watchword to the judgment of a wider audience at this time, it is my hope that this may encourage much-needed independent assessments of the technique. In this respect I would welcome any communications from readers who feel they have observations, data or ideas that may be of value and interest. You can e-mail me at [midaniels@transpersonalscience.org](mailto:midaniels@transpersonalscience.org). I cannot guarantee to reply to your e-mails but please be assured that each one is read with interest. Please also note that regrettably I am unable to enter into correspondence regarding the interpretation of individual matrices.

This book is designed to be read sequentially. If, however, you wish to try out the Watchword technique immediately then you should turn straight to Chapter 2.

### **Preface to the revised editions (2004-2014)**

It is now (2014) over 20 years since the first edition of this book was published. In that time, I have continued to work extensively with the Watchword technique and have presented many training workshops to professionals in the fields of education, counselling, psychotherapy, business and management. The technique (including an online interactive version) also now features on my website [www.transpersonalscience.org](http://www.transpersonalscience.org), where individuals are given basic instructions on matrix completion and introductory guides to interpretation.

As a result of the technique's wider dissemination, I have been pleased to receive considerable feedback from people who have used the method on themselves, with friends and family, with clients, or with groups. This feedback has served to confirm the usefulness of the technique in self-analysis, in counselling and therapy, as well as in a variety of training contexts.

One particularly gratifying consequence of the first publication of the book in 1992 was a letter I received later that year from an elderly gentleman living in London. This person, it turned out, was the originator of the proto-technique from which the Watchword method was later developed. He had conceived the procedure, he informed me, in the period between 1956 and 1963 from ideas in C.G. Jung, Cabala, and Platonic philosophy. At that time the method was being used to detect people who would be interested in following an esoteric path and, in doing this, it focussed specifically on the

left-right polarity. As such, the gentleman expressed particular interest in the way that Watchword also examined the upper-lower polarity and he was pleased at the constructive use that I had made of the original technique. He also graciously wrote that he was very happy with the way I had referred to him in the first edition as the ‘unknown originator’ of the technique and that he sought no further acknowledgement.

This revised edition is a complete reissue of the first edition with corrections, updates, and additional sections on the six levels of word association and on the relationship between Watchword type and MBTI® type.

I hope that you find it helpful in your quest for self-understanding.

Michael Daniels  
Isle of Man  
February 2014

### **From reviews of the first edition**

*‘An intriguing and new method of self-analysis.’*

**The Bookseller**, 8th November 1991

*‘It promises to fertilise you with the seeds for personal growth and lead you through the dusty corridors towards your inner psyche.’*

**Daily Express**, 26th December 1991

*‘An exciting new technique of self-analysis.’*

**Human Potential**, Vol. 17, No. 1, Spring 1992

*‘The attraction of this technique is that the reader produces a word structure that is personally, indeed uniquely, meaningful, unselfconsciously created and uncensored.’*

**Self and Society**, Vol. 21, No. 1, March 1993

*‘The matrix cannot offer any “final” truths ... but it can bring to light complexes of significant imagery and ideas.’*

**Exceptional Human Experience**, Vol. 12, No. 1, June 1994



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# 1 Towards self-knowledge

‘Know thyself’, Socrates urges us, for ‘the unexamined life is not worth living’. Throughout history and across the cultural divide, self-knowledge has been recognized as a major – perhaps the major – mark of the truly mature, enlightened person and, simultaneously, as a royal road to ultimate fulfilment.

## **CURIOSITY AND ENTERTAINMENT**

Most people, if asked, would readily accept the importance of self-understanding. Furthermore, if the current fashion for the kind of ‘test-yourself’ questionnaires found in popular magazines and across the Internet is anything to go by, it would seem that many of us have an almost insatiable curiosity to discover unknown ‘facts’ about ourselves – our latent talents, secret longings, sexual attractiveness, basic values, emotional needs, intellectual capacity, and so on. Much of this interest, I am sure, is motivated by a simple desire to be amused and flattered rather than by any genuine attempt to discover the ‘truth’ about our personalities or situations. Yet somewhere, at the back of our minds perhaps, there may be the vague, unvoiced hope that we might learn something of value.

Of course, the ‘tests’ that appear in the popular media have been designed primarily for their entertainment value and for their supposed ability to increase sales and readership, not for their psychological validity. They are not intended to be taken too seriously by the reader, or to make any lasting contribution to human knowledge. They are cultural ephemera to be enjoyed in an idle moment, shared and discussed over a coffee break, and disposed of and forgotten by the next morning. For this reason, they have rarely been constructed in any rigorous manner and it is unusual for their results to have been assessed for accuracy. Put simply, you cannot be sure that what the test indicates about you is in any way true (although test results, like newspaper horoscopes, are often so general that they may apply to almost anyone).

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL MEASUREMENT**

In contrast to the kind of questionnaires mentioned above (which are usually devised by journalists or bloggers) the psychological profession has, over the years, developed a whole barrage of ‘standardized’ tests and assessment procedures for measuring everything from academic aptitude to xenophobia, adjustment to zestfulness. These tests have generally been constructed and evaluated according to accepted ‘scientific’ principles and as such they may be expected to produce data which describe faithfully the characteristics being assessed.

Unfortunately, the sheer number and bewildering variety of available psychological tests makes it impossible in practice for laypersons to make any sensible decisions about what ought to be measured in their particular cases. Even the average psychologist often finds difficulty in selecting tests for specific purposes and may need to consult colleagues with greater knowledge and experience. More importantly, most psychological tests are complex or highly technical and usually require specialist training in administration, scoring and interpretation if they are to be used with any degree of confidence. For this reason, and because test results can be abused by the unscrupulous or inexperienced, the use of many psychological procedures is restricted to properly qualified individuals who agree to be bound by professional codes of conduct.

Many psychologists now offer assessment facilities on a commercial basis to both individuals and organizations. You may also have come across various agencies that will draw up personal profiles of skills, aptitudes, personality traits, needs or values. Generally this is done for the purpose of vocational guidance, personnel selection or management training, and, in these terms, bona fide psychologists and agencies can provide a valuable service.

## **THE LIMITATIONS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS**

Although it will often be found interesting and helpful to obtain such a psychological profile, there are also very real personal dangers in this kind of objective description of the self. Most importantly, we may come to believe that our personality is fixed and unalterable; that we will always be intelligent, popular or anxious, for example, because we ‘possess’ these particular qualities. Secondly, such characterization leads us subtly into thinking of ourselves as just a collection of unrelated psychological components. This belief inevitably takes away from us the sense of unity and wholeness that is the cornerstone of our experience of being persons. Psychological tests may point out the trees, but what about the wood? Where am ‘I’ in all this complex description of ‘attributes’?

More than this, psychological tests don’t *explain* anything; they cannot indicate meaning, context, or personal significance. It may or may not be

interesting to learn that I have a high anxiety level. But why am I anxious? What led to these feelings? What does my anxiety mean to me? What does it signify in the context of my present situation? What can or should I do about it? These are questions that remain unanswered from test results for they are indeed unanswerable in this manner.

If I may be permitted an analogy that is, perhaps, not as trite as it may at first appear, the psychological measurement of a person is rather like describing a book by listing its subject matter and literary qualities. Thus the book is an historical novel set in the Victorian era, written in English, intelligently constructed, fascinating, insightful, factually accurate – overall a good read. Such a description is, of course, useful up to a point. It may, for example, help us to decide whether or not to buy it as a present for a friend. But it is no substitute for reading the book. It gives us no idea of the book's story, meaning, or ultimate significance. In the final analysis, it is simply irrelevant.

The plain fact is that psychological tests have been designed by psychologists for psychologists (and for their paymasters) and that the purpose of the vast majority of these tests is to categorize and label *other people* so that their objective characteristics may be studied 'scientifically' and so that individuals may be assigned appropriate social roles or placed in their 'rightful' societal position. Even where tests are used diagnostically, for example in clinical or educational settings, their purpose is generally to justify and direct some kind of professional therapeutic intervention. In these cases it is more important that the psychologist can interpret and act on the results than that the client may gain insight into his or her own behaviour. With very few exceptions, psychological tests have not been developed as aids to self-understanding and their suitability for this purpose is therefore severely limited.

To continue the analogy used above, psychological tests describe people as a bookseller or librarian might describe a book. As such these descriptions are very useful for those in the business of buying, selling or cataloguing. But booksellers and librarians rarely read the volumes on their shelves and they certainly don't need to understand them in order to do their job properly. Psychologists with test batteries are not so very different.

## **THE NEED FOR UNDERSTANDING**

Very few of us would claim that we could understand another person, whether a friend or a character in a novel for that matter, by being shown their psychological 'profile' – and we should not be hoodwinked into believing that self-understanding may be acquired in this way. Like characters in novels, real people can be truly understood only by appreciating the story of their lives. This is why we prefer to read the full narrative of a novel or biography or, failing that, an accurate synopsis. We would feel totally cheated and frustrated if the book or synopsis merely

contained a set of test scores for each of the story's principal players. To know people is to know what has happened to them, what they are experiencing and doing now, and what they anticipate for the future. More than this, we need to understand how past, present and future are linked in a coherent and believable narrative unity. To do this we must *interpret* their lives. We must make sense of their actions and words. We must create a meaning that might eventually place everything into perspective.

The process of coming to know ourselves is, I believe, essentially the same. We must discover or, more accurately, continually re-*create* the story of our own lives – the pattern and meaning that can make sense of our individual journey. Such a story not only maps out past progress and enables us to take current bearings, but it may also indicate the way forward. In this manner our personal narrative provides a sense of direction, with positive guidance for the future, as well as offering an interpretation of past and present events.

## **LEARNING TO OBSERVE THE SELF**

To begin our process of self-discovery we need to do two things. Firstly, we must learn to pay attention to our own situation, experience, thoughts, feelings and actions. Secondly, we must look for underlying patterns, structures and meanings. Although we may attempt these activities unaided, history teaches us that people have always sought external assistance of one kind or another. This has typically taken the form of learning special techniques of attentional training or self-examination (e.g., meditation, the keeping of diaries, free association, dream recall) usually combined with a particular system of psychological or psychospiritual interpretation (e.g., the Hebrew Cabala, Buddhist Abidharma, Freudian or Jungian analysis). Often such training takes place under the personal guidance of a teacher, guru, mentor, counsellor or therapist.

The reasons for this reliance on external aid are complex. Most crucially, it seems that people need to be taught how to observe themselves effectively. In any other branch of knowledge it is axiomatic that students must first learn basic observation skills. Fledgling geologists must be taught how to observe rock and soil, painters and photographers how to view a scene, physicians how to examine their patients, counsellors and therapists how to listen to their clients. We all know and take for granted the difference that a trained eye or ear can make in these areas.

When it comes to self-observation, however, most of us rather arrogantly and naively assume that we are naturally qualified. Perhaps this is because we feel we have some kind of immediate and direct access to the contents of our own minds – access that is denied to others and therefore something they cannot help us with. Yet a moment's thought will reveal the fallacy of this view. In the first place we must all have surely experienced occasions when another person has shown greater insight into our personality or situation

than we were immediately capable of. Secondly, of course, most of the time we don't observe ourselves at all – and certainly not in any rigorous or systematic fashion. We go through life largely on auto-pilot, only partially conscious and rarely in any sense truly *self-conscious*. We say, do and think things blithely, spontaneously, with little forethought and less reflection. We are, as Gurdjieff (1974) put it, to all intents 'asleep'; shaken briefly into wakefulness only on rare occasions of shock or personal trauma.

## SCHOOLS AND SYSTEMS

Whenever we wake up sufficiently to take the process of self-observation seriously, we will immediately encounter further difficulties. One problem is that of knowing exactly what to observe. Clearly we cannot attend to everything that we experience and do and, like our trainee geologists and painters, we must learn to notice what is important and to ignore irrelevant details.

In practice, what we are taught to observe depends critically upon the particular school or system of self-understanding that we follow. For example, Buddhists will be taught to pay attention, via their meditation practice, to bodily sensations and to the spontaneous flow of disconnected thoughts as they arise and disappear in consciousness. Gestalt therapists train their clients to recognize their emotions and to focus upon 'here and now' events. Freudian psychoanalysts encourage patients to 'free associate' (saying everything that comes into the mind without censoring thoughts in any way) and to talk freely about past experiences. Jungian analysts often emphasize the remembering and interpretation of dreams. Transactional analysis involves a system for examining patterns of communication between people. Rational-emotive therapy forces individuals to recognize and question the irrational beliefs that they hold about themselves and others. Whichever system is followed, a common denominator of all these 'insight' therapies is that people are taught to pay attention to some aspect of their being that they had previously been unable, unwilling, or simply too lazy to observe. The major differences between the various techniques are primarily a consequence of each method adopting its own theoretical perspective or interpretive system.

I do not wish to get involved in arguments about which procedure, perspective or system is 'best'. All have their advocates and devotees, and all can produce strings of clients who will swear to the success of the approach in their own particular cases. For what it is worth, the available objective evidence, based on comparisons of various forms of psychotherapy, indicates that all methods are reasonably effective and that no one method is consistently better than any other (see, for example, Duncan *et al.*, 2010; Rachman and Wilson, 1980; Smith *et al.*, 1980). What appears much more important than technical approach is the nature of the *relationship* between therapist and client. There is also some indication that the effectiveness of an

approach depends partly upon the nature of the problems a person has and also upon individual temperament or character. What this evidence clearly suggests, however, is that some form of self-examination is certainly better than none.

## **SELF-DECEPTION AND THE ROLE OF THE OTHER**

No matter which technique of self-observation is adopted, a problem that is always faced is that of bias or self-deception. Most of us like to think well of ourselves and it is all too easy to allow our personal vanity and need for esteem to distort the evidence of our senses. In this way we all show a tendency to 'cook the books' so that we are revealed, for example, to be warm, good, popular, consistent or untroubled (some people, however, have such a low opinion of themselves that they may unrealistically emphasize their bad qualities).

One of the main arguments in favour of employing a teacher or therapist is that it is often much harder to fool someone else than it is to deceive ourselves. Because of this, such people may, if they are doing their job properly, act as a faithful mirror to the self, helping to reveal us to ourselves in our true light and colours. This is important because experience shows that the process of self-study, when working effectively, generally throws up much highly unpleasant material about the self. For the simple fact is that we are almost certainly not as good, consistent or untroubled as we may care to think and once we start digging into the self we can unearth some messy stuff indeed. Most people's response to this, rather than working with and learning from the experience, is either to turn a blind eye or to become overwhelmed by feelings of guilt, shame or personal failure. Here a teacher or therapist can help enormously by encouraging us to keep things in proper perspective and by opening up ways of making sense of it all.

A related reason for working with another is the ability of an independent mind to confront and challenge the self, providing a much-needed stimulus to personal growth. In the absence of this kind of challenge it is easy to avoid paying attention to personal problems that ideally should be worked upon. Also we allow ourselves to continue through life unchanged, with our old, habitual, often stereotyped and unhelpful attitudes intact.

## **PARTIAL METHODS**

Many people have no desire to follow a prolonged course of intense personal discipline or individual therapy. Or they may simply not have the time, opportunity or resources to further their interest. Such people usually rely on other external aids to self-understanding such as books, workshops or short courses in order to provide basic ideas and practical material which they may then utilize in their own time as they see fit.

The last few decades have seen a burgeoning of interest in this approach to self-discovery. This is witnessed, for example, by the huge growth in the number of books published each year on various techniques of self-development such as meditation, dream analysis, auto-hypnosis, positive thinking, the I Ching, and creative visualization. Then again there are innumerable courses and workshops being offered in every major city on such things as assertiveness training, co-counselling, encounter, dance therapy, psychodrama, or Reichian massage. Endless variety here for all interests, tastes and pockets.

Provided these methods are approached with a degree of care, discrimination, objectivity and, not least, humour, there is much of value that can be learned. In the absence of these qualities, it must also be said that there are definite associated hazards. In addition to the problem of self-deception, there is the more immediate danger of rushing headlong into activities that may serve no useful purpose in our particular case. It is sad to relate that many people, failing to realize any clear overall strategy for self-development, become addicted to these techniques, either sticking rigidly and dogmatically to a chosen favourite or jumping wildly from one to another in a seemingly desperate search for new experience or new 'truths' about the self. But the very nature of most of these activities is that they provide partial answers to circumscribed problems. They are not panaceas for every ill, nor are they intended to become crutches upon which people become dependent. Above all, they are not religions or ideologies. They should be approached cautiously and intelligently, used only when appropriate, and abandoned as soon as they have outlived their purpose.

The major limitation of these partial techniques is that they fail to provide any overall picture of the self and its narrative history. Because of this they cannot serve to guide our lives in any meaningful fashion. They may provide helpful short-term relief and practical assistance in specific situations, but even then only when we have decided that this is what our life's story requires of us at this moment in time. But how do we make these decisions? How do we discover our self's story? What 'method' can help us in our quest for meaning and personal significance?

One answer to these questions is undoubtedly the process of working with another, as exemplified in genuine spiritual traditions by the dialogue between teacher and student, and in counselling or psychotherapy by that between therapist and client. But what can the individual seeker do? Is there nothing that those who prefer to go it alone can use to aid their attempts at understanding the whole pattern of their lives?

## **THE WATCHWORD TECHNIQUE**

It is against this background that the Watchword technique is set. Watchword is, in one sense, a 'partial' method of self-discovery. Certainly the technique is not something that should come to be relied upon or taken

too seriously. It is not the only tool of self-discovery an individual may need, nor necessarily the best, nor indispensable. But in focusing upon the whole of the self, in stimulating self-questioning and inner dialogue, and in providing a means of interpreting the self's development as well as structure, Watchword offers the promise that we may begin to decipher our own personal mystery – the story of our life.

A beginning. A tool. This is all that is claimed. The work, the achievement, the meaning – all these will be your own. Try out the technique. Learn from it if you can. Dismiss it if you must. But give it a fair trial. At the very least you should find the experience interesting.



## 2 The Watchword technique

It is instructive to gain one's first experience of the Watchword technique while innocent of its exact purpose and, more particularly, its structure. For this reason, try to resist the temptation to skim through the remainder of the book at this stage. Just read on and follow the simple set of procedures outlined below. If you have been told something about the technique by a friend, or have already glanced at some of the pages, that can't be helped. You may decide later how much your prior knowledge has influenced what you are about to do. But so that others may approach Watchword spontaneously, please don't bias the expectations of your friends by revealing the technique's system before they have the chance of completing at least one exercise. In the long run they will thank you for your silence.

### **COMPLETING THE WATCHWORD MATRIX**

To begin, all you need to know is that Watchword is a game of word association. Make sure that you are comfortable and will not be disturbed for at least half an hour. You may wish to switch off your phone. Ideally you should be alone but, in any case, do not allow anyone to watch or comment upon what you are doing, or to interfere in any other way.

Now try to clear your mind of any current preoccupations. Close your eyes and perhaps focus gently on the sensations of breathing slowly in and out. Relax any obvious tensions in your body, adjusting your position if necessary. You should be aiming to achieve a state of relaxed, vacant attentiveness. Try to forget what you are about to do. Above all, if you have carried out the Watchword technique before, avoid rehearsing any responses you may think to make. Simply pay attention to your breathing or other bodily sensations. Just two or three minutes in this kind of mental preparation will be found more than to repay the time spent.

When you feel ready, take a copy of a blank matrix form (see Appendix) and proceed as follows:

### Step 1

Place the form horizontally and write *eight different words*, from left to right, in the boxes along the *top* of the sheet. You may write any words at all – just the first words that come into your head. Try not to censor your thoughts in any way and don't spend too long thinking what to write. Also, don't write a sentence or grammatically connected sequence. Simply write eight separate words.

### Step 2

Write another *eight different words*, from left to right, in the boxes along the *bottom* of the sheet. *Do NOT turn the sheet upside down to do this*. Again, just write the first words that come into your mind.

### Step 3

Refer to Figure 1 and consider the two words that you have written in boxes 1 and 2. Now think of another word that, in your opinion, *somehow connects* the two words that you are considering. The connection can be of any kind at all as long as it makes sense to you. Don't worry if another person might not understand the association you make. If you think of more than one connecting word, choose the one that provides the link which, in

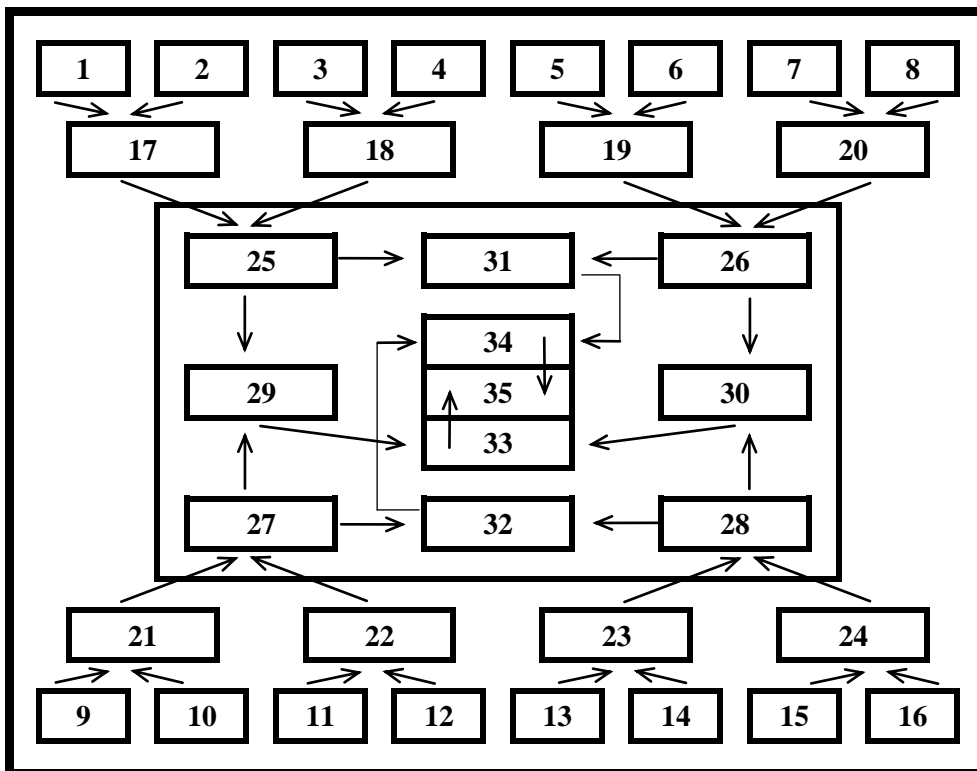


Figure 1 Sequence of words and associations

Table 1 The Watchword connections

<i>Boxes to connect</i>		<i>Connecting box</i>
1	2	17
3	4	18
5	6	19
7	8	20
9	10	21
11	12	22
13	14	23
15	16	24
17	18	25
19	20	26
21	22	27
23	24	28
25	27	29
26	28	30
25	26	31
27	28	32
29	30	33
31	32	34
33	34	35

your opinion, is the most personally meaningful. The word you choose must be different from the two you are considering but it may, if so desired, be the same as a word written elsewhere on the sheet. If you cannot think of a *single* word that makes an appropriate link, you may use a short phrase instead. Now write the connecting word (phrase) in box 17.

#### Step 4

Repeat Step 3, using the sequence of connections shown in Table 1. Do not run ahead of yourself – make sure that each connection is written down before proceeding to the next. Also, once you have written a connecting word, do not change it.

#### QUESTIONS

You have now completed the basic Watchword procedure and are ready to begin to interpret what you have done. Before reading further, however, you might like to consider these questions:

1. Did you feel that, as you progressed through the exercise, you seemed to be tapping deeper and more psychologically meaningful layers of thought?

2. Do the eleven words that appear within the rectangular outline seem in any way significant to you, perhaps when understood as metaphors or symbols?
3. Do the central three words in particular seem to encapsulate or symbolize something very basic about your personality or present situation?

If you can answer 'yes' to these questions, then you should find the interpretive process interesting, relatively straightforward and, hopefully, informative. If, on the other hand, the words you have written seem trivial or meaningless, this does *not* necessarily indicate that the exercise has failed to 'work' for you. It may mean, however, that the process of interpretation will require some effort on your part and a willingness to explore indirect or symbolic associations.

# 3 Rationale and structure

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF WATCHWORD

In 1984, a psychologist colleague showed me a simple technique of word association that he had himself been taught by a friend. He didn't know quite how or where this technique had originated and, at the time of the original publication of this book, subsequent enquiries had failed to identify a specific source (however, see the Preface to the revised editions). It seems that the basic method had been doing the rounds for several years, being passed on from one interested person to another. The principal aim of this technique, I was told, was to trace a sequence of associations from an original set of sixteen freely generated words until a single resultant connection was formed. This final word was believed to be of some important personal significance.

The technique intrigued me, as it seemed clearly the case that the final word I had derived expressed something essential about my situation at the time. More than this, however, I felt that many of the other connecting words I had formed were also personally significant and, crucially, that they were organized according to some distinct underlying pattern or structure.

For many months I speculated upon and experimented with the technique, using myself and friends as guinea pigs. In studying the results, organizational principles gradually began to emerge and the basic structure of the Watchword matrix eventually became established. Through my experiments and deliberations I also found it useful to extend much further the sequence of connections that I had originally been shown. Finally, as I have explained in the Preface, in developing the Watchword structure I found myself being drawn inexorably towards the specifically Jungian formulation that will be described. In this respect I reiterate that Watchword may be considered to be one of the very few truly Jungian techniques of self-analysis that are available for general use.

Since evolving the Watchword system I have demonstrated the technique to many hundreds of people, both individually and in groups. Many of these have also been interested enough to try the basic method with their own families, friends or colleagues. It is very difficult to test scientifically a procedure such as Watchword, although preliminary studies on the kinds of connections made have given support to the system's basic system and

structure. I can say with confidence, however, that most people who have tried the method and have examined their responses carefully find Watchword to be both interesting and enlightening. In many cases individuals have been astounded at the accuracy of Watchword's personal diagnosis and have gained important practical insights into their present situations.

## **WATCHWORD'S PURPOSE**

Watchword is an aid to psychological understanding. Its purpose is to help individuals to identify important psychological forces and tendencies operating within their own beings so that they may begin to understand more clearly their own personal stories. Unlike astrology, the I Ching, tarot and similar divinational practices, Watchword is not a system of fortune telling and it does not directly offer advice about problems. In providing a description and interpretation of the psychological 'field' in which a person is currently operating it may, however, assist the making of choices and decisions.

In a very real sense, *you* are accountable for everything that the Watchword technique generates. You choose each word and every association, and you decide how to interpret the series of connections that you have formed. The structure of the Watchword matrix, to be described later, is intended to provide merely a skeleton of possible meanings upon which you must hang the flesh of your own experience. With Watchword, you become your own analyst. This book should provide all the information you need and it is not necessary to consult a guru, therapist or expert. While you may find it useful to discuss your matrices with others, you should exercise caution in permitting anyone else to suggest interpretations. If nothing else, Watchword is a useful technique for teaching us to trust our own insights and intuitions.

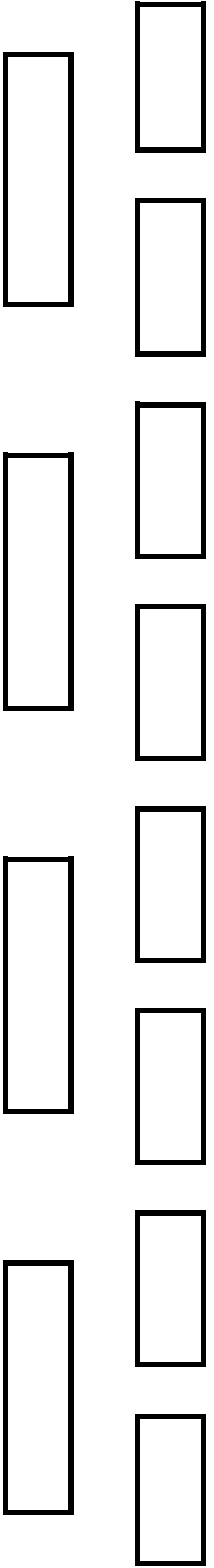
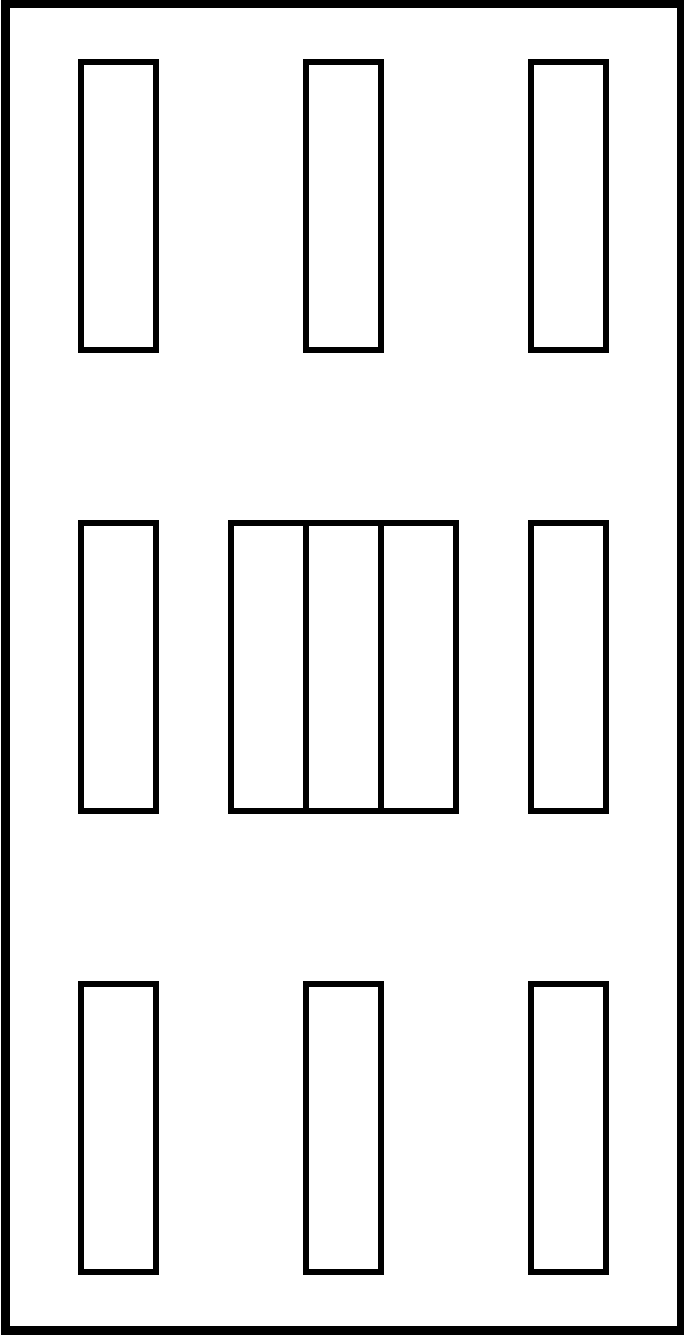
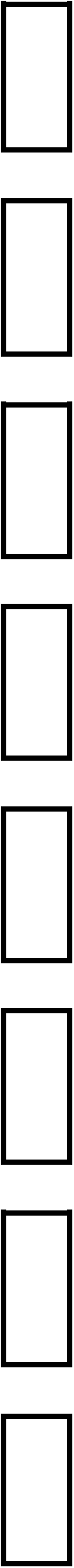
At one level, Watchword may be considered simply as an amusing party game or form of psychological solitaire. At its most profound, it is a system that may be used to guide the individual along the path toward self-fulfilment. In the terminology of Carl Jung's analytical psychology, the Watchword matrix provides a *uniting symbol* or representation of the whole integrated *psyche*, mind or personality (see, for example, Jacobi, 1968; Jung, 1968a, b, c). Jung believed that by studying and reflecting upon such uniting symbols, which are generally symmetrical images arranged about a central point (for example the Hindu and Buddhist *mandalas*), the person was aided in the difficult process of self-realization or *individuation*. These symbols do not simply *describe* psychological harmony; they may, according to Jung, help a person to *achieve* it.

To continue reading *Self-Discovery the Jungian Way*, purchase the eBook at <http://www.lybrary.com/selfdiscovery-the-jungian-way-p-150450.html>

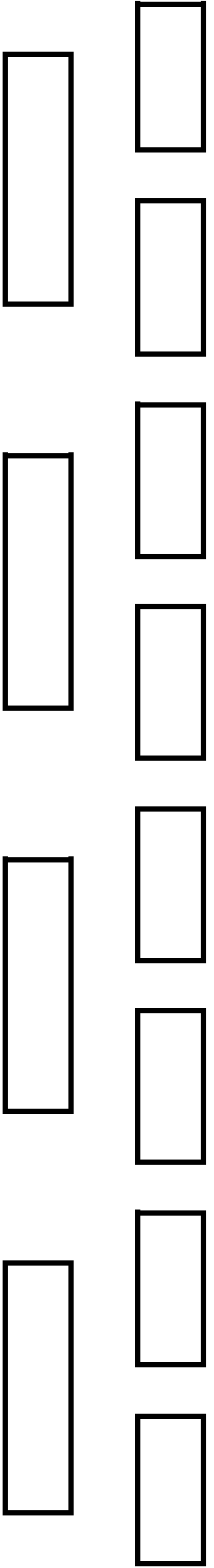
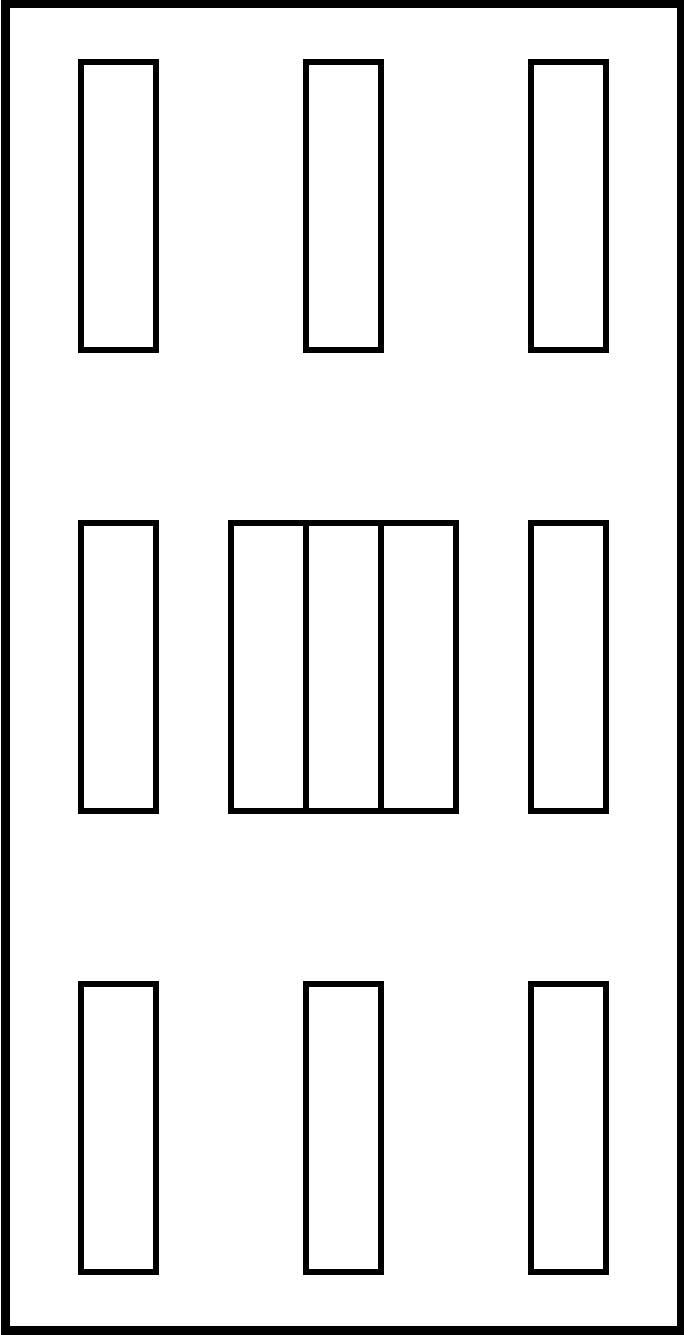
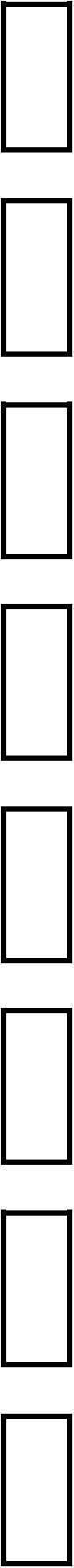
# Appendix

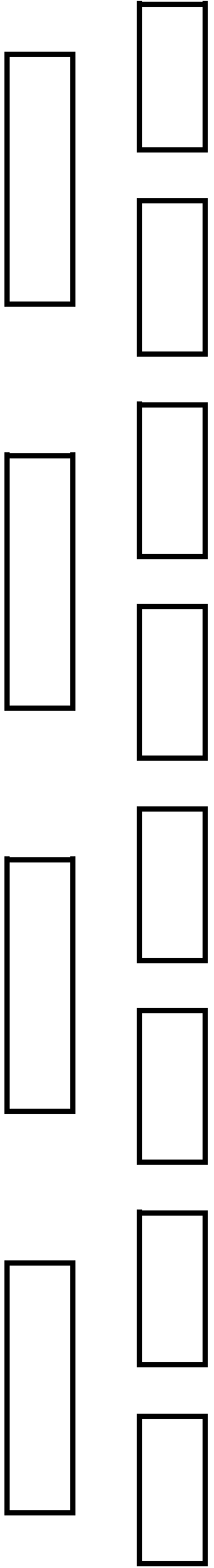
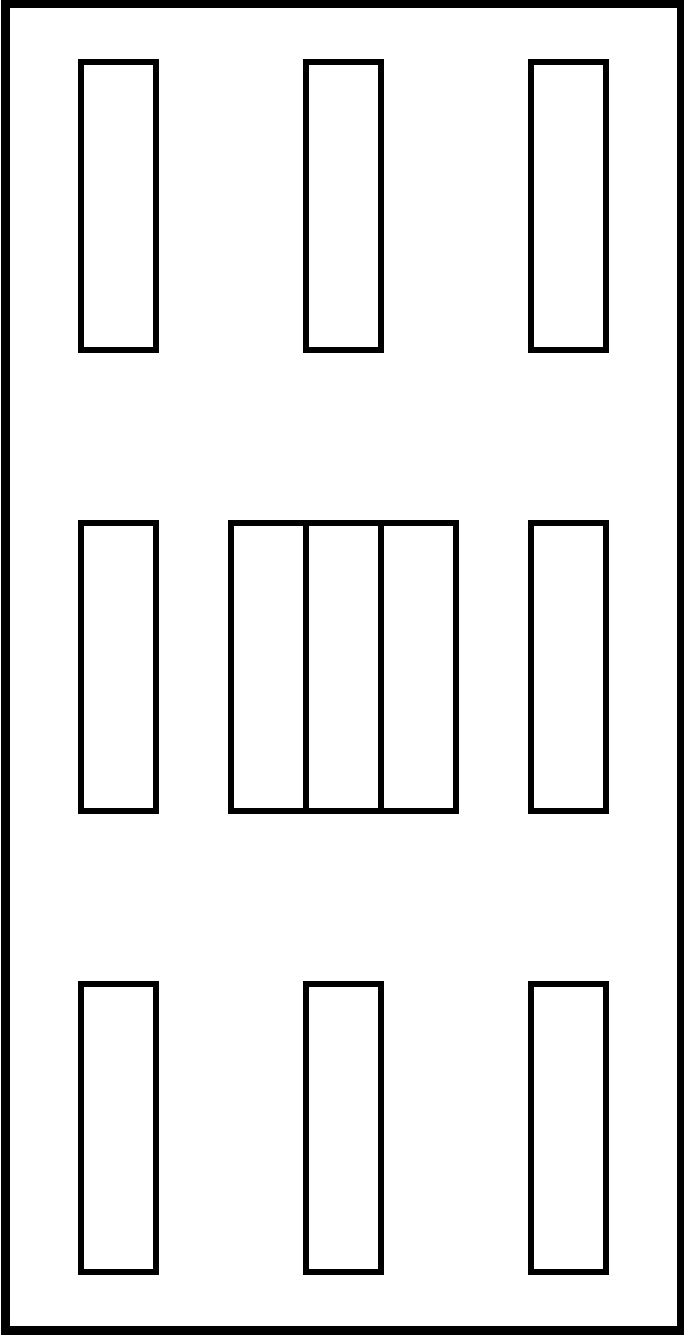
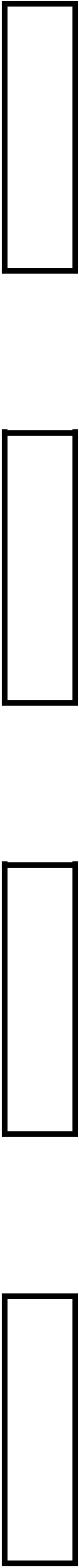
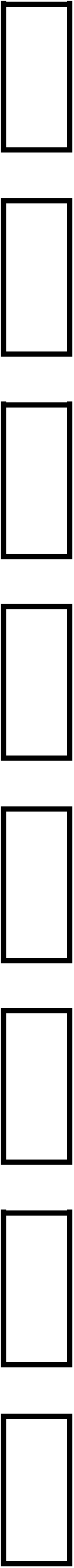
## Blank matrix forms

These forms are for you to use. Full instructions for filling them in are given in Chapter 2. Please note that you should complete one matrix *before* studying the explanations of the Watchword technique provided in later chapters.









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# Name index

- Adam 24  
Ames, L.B. 21  
Anaxagoras 24  
Annett, M. 20  
Avalon, A. 18
- Barsley, M. 20-1  
Borod, J.C. 27  
Bradshaw, J.L. 27
- Cirlot, J.E. 19, 28  
Cutler, W. 23
- Daniels, M. viii, x, 46  
Dawson, E.R. 24  
Duncan, B.L. 5
- Eve 24
- Freud, S. 4-5, 97
- Gaia 24  
Gesell, A. 21  
Gimbutas, M. 23  
Gurdjieff, G.I. 5
- Isis 24
- Jacobi, J. 14, 40, 42, 44, 47, 49, 50, 52, 97, 103-4  
'Jane' 95-6, 102, 107-10  
Jongbloet, P.H. 23  
Jung, C.G. viii-ix, 4-5, 13-15, 28, 37, 40-64, 82, 85, 90-3, 97, 103-9, 113-14, 116, 120, 124, 139-40
- McCaulley, M.H. 85, 90, 92  
McClelland, D.C. 93  
McGilchrist, I. 27  
McManus, C. 20-1  
Myers, I.B. 85, 90, 92  
Myers, P.B. 90
- Nettleton, N.C. 27  
Nuit 24
- Ornstein, R.E. 27  
Osiris 24
- Pythagoras 24
- Ra 24  
'Rachel' 95-6, 99-102  
Rachman, S.J. 5
- St. Matthew 22  
Samuels, A. 104  
Satan 17  
Smith, M.L. 5  
Socrates 1  
'Susan' 127-35
- Tucci, G. 15
- Von Franz, M.-L. 103
- Wilson, G.T. 5  
Wolff, W. 26  
Wood, E. 18
- Zeus 24, 38

# Subject index

- ambiversion 64, 85, 88-9, 91, 94, 98, 102, 107, 109-10  
amplification 97-100, 114-15  
analytical psychology viii, 14, 40; *see also* Jungian psychology  
androgyny 26; *see also* soul image  
anima 40, 44, 103, 116, 124-6, 140-1  
animus 40, 44, 99, 101, 103, 109, 132, 140-1  
archetypes 44-5, 47, 60, 72, 97, 112-15, 120, 137; and individuation 103-8  
attitude 56-8, 62-4, 98; differentiation of 113, 130; inferior 57, 90-1, 103, 140; *see also* extraversion; introversion  
backward, as symbol 17, 19, 28-9  
*Battle* 31-3, 50-1, 98, 100-1, 103, 105-9, 115, 120, 123, 125, 132  
*Binah* 25  
birth control, and moon 23  
body, sides of 26-8  
brain 18, 20, 27-8  
Buddhism vii, 4-5, 14, 72-3  
Cabala ix, 4, 18, 24-5  
calendar, lunar 23  
centre, as symbol 15, 28  
cerebral hemispheres 27-8, 30  
chakras 18  
*Chokmah*, 25  
Christianity 17, 22, 25, 28  
circle, as symbol 14-15  
coaching 139  
comparing matrices 130-3  
compensation 54-5, 90  
complex 46, 97  
composite matrices 133-6  
consciousness 22, 25-30, 36, 41, 45, 47-50; *see also* attitude; function  
corpus callosum 27  
counselling ix, 4-7; and Watchword 111, 139  
cross, as symbol 19, 28-9  
day, principle of 22, 25-6  
death 15, 19, 22-3, 34  
*Destiny* 31-3, 37, 51-2, 98, 100-1, 103, 105-8, 110, 115, 121, 123, 125, 132  
development of self 103, 105-6, 108-10, 125, 132  
developmental relationships 100, 102-6, 132; *see also* development of self; inner development; outer development  
diagnosis 3; and Watchword 138-9  
dialectical relationships 100-2, 121-3, 132  
differentiation 45, 91, 113  
direction *see* spatial metaphor  
down, as symbol 17-19, 28-32  
dreaming 4-5, 7, 22-3, 25-7  
*Dwarf* 30-4, 38-9, 48, 99, 101-2, 114, 116, 122-3  
Earth Mother *see* Goddess cult  
east, as symbol 21-2, 28-9  
ego: ideals 38, 45-6; Jungian 49, 107-8  
Egyptian mythology 24  
emotion: and face 26-7; and feeling 54, 63; and handedness 20; and moon 23; and *Soul* 39-41  
evil: and *Shadow* 46-7; and solar cult 21, 24; and spatial metaphor 17-25; and *Spectre* 48-9  
evolution, symbols of 18-19, 28-9  
extraversion: defined 56-7; in matrix 63-4; and outer development 105; symbols of 25-6; and unconscious 90-1, 140; *see also* feeling; intuition; judgment; perception; sensation; thinking  
face 26-7  
feeling 53-6; assessing 63; extraverted 61-2, 80-2, 96; introverted 62, 82-4  
female principle 22-6, 44, 103-4  
folklore 17-18, 22-4, 28

forward, as symbol 17, 19, 28-9  
 four, principle of 17, 28-9  
 free association 4-5, 97  
 function 53-6, 98; auxiliary 55, 85, 96,  
 113, 130; inferior 54-5, 90, 140; mixed  
 55-6, 64, 85-90; *see also* feeling;  
 intuition; sensation; thinking  
 gender *see* sex differences  
 gestalt therapy 5  
*Giant* 31-4, 37-8, 99, 101, 114-15, 122-3  
 God, gods 17-18, 21-6, 44, 72  
 Goddess cult 23-6, 44  
 Greek cross, as symbol 28-9  
 Greek mythology 17, 21-2, 24  
*Guide* 30-3, 43-5, 99, 101, 103-4, 108-9,  
 114, 117, 121-2, 124, 132  
 hands, handedness 20-1, 25-7, 34  
 hemispheres *see* cerebral hemispheres  
 hero 24, 72, 120  
 horizontal dimension, symbolism of 19-35  
 hypochondria 55, 60  
*ida* 24  
 identification 42, 45  
 identity, identity crisis 49, 105, 113-14,  
 119-20  
 illusion 22, 59, 67  
 imagination 22-3, 54-5  
*Imago* 30-3, 38, 45-6, 99, 100-3, 107-8,  
 114, 118, 121-4, 132  
 individuation viii, 103-8; symbols of 14-  
 15, 37  
 initiation, into outward and inner reality  
 104, 108  
 inner development 46, 103-8, 124-5, 132  
 inner principle 25-6, 28-34, 39-40, 43-7  
 integration, *see* psyche  
 introversion: defined 56-7; and inner  
 development 105; in matrix 63-4;  
 symbols of 25-6; and unconscious 90-  
 1, 140; *see also* feeling; intuition;  
 judgment; sensation; thinking  
 intuition 43, 53-6; assessing 62-4;  
 extraverted 59-60, 70-2; introverted  
 60, 72-4, 96, 112-13  
 involution, symbols of 18-19, 28  
 judging, judgment 53, 92  
 Jungian analysis 4-5  
 Jungian psychology: criticisms 104-5; and  
 symbols 14-17, 28, 120; and  
 Watchword vii-x, 13-14, 37, 106-8,  
 139-40; *see also* amplification;  
 archetypes; ego; individuation; mana  
 personality; *Persona*; psychological  
 types; self-realization; *Shadow*; soul  
 image; stages of life  
 keys: defined 30-3; described 36-52;  
 interpretation 98-100, 114-21  
 king 23-4, 44  
*kundalini* 18  
 language 17, 20, 27  
 left: handedness 20-1, 25-7; hemisphere  
 27-8; side of body 26-7; side of matrix  
 30-5, 105; as symbol 19-29  
 levels of word association 15-16  
 life story 3-4, 7-8  
 lunacy 22-3  
 lunar cult 21-6, 44  
 madness *see* lunacy; psychosis  
 magic 22-3, 44  
 Magna Mater *see* Goddess cult  
 male: domination 23-5; principle 23-6, 44,  
 103-4  
 mana personality 43-5, 103-4, 107-9, 117  
 mandala 14-17  
 mask 41-2  
 maternal principle 22-3  
 matriarchy 23  
 matrix: composite 133-6; procedure 9-12;  
 stabilities and change 127-36; structure  
 15-16, 30-5  
 matter, principle of 19, 44  
 maze, as symbol 120  
 MBTI *see* Myers-Briggs Type Indicator  
 meaning 3-4, 7  
 meditation 4-5  
 menstruation 22-4  
 mid-life crisis 104-5  
 moon *see* lunar cult



morality 18-19, 43-4, 50-1, 60  
 Mount Olympus 17  
 Myers-Briggs Type Indicator x, 85, 91-3;  
     compared with Watchword 92-3  
 mysticism 60-2, 72  
 mythology 17-18, 22-4, 59, 97  
 narrative of life 3-4, 7-8, 100, 110  
 neurosis 57-62  
 night, principle of 22-6  
 north, as symbol 21-2, 28-9  
 North Star 22  
  
 opposites: conjunction of 15-17, 28-9, 31,  
     51, 101-2, 107; in matrix 30-5; tables  
     of 19, 25  
 other, role of 6, 34  
 outer development 102-8, 123-5, 132  
 outer principle 25, 28-35, 41-2, 45-6, 48  
 ovaries 24  
*Oxford English Dictionary* 20  
 palmistry 26  
 patriarchy 23-5  
 perception 53, 92  
*Persona* 30-3, 37, 41-3, 99, 101-3, 105,  
     107-8, 114, 116, 121-4, 131-2; Jungian  
     41-2, 108  
 personality: inner 33, 39-41, 50;  
     integration 14, 41, 91; multiple 62;  
     outer 33, 41-3, 50, 104; tests 1-3, 138-  
     9  
*pingala* 24  
 polarity *see* opposites  
 progression, principle of 17-19, 28-35, 37-  
     8, 43-6, 50-1  
 projection 40-1, 46-9, 57-8, 62, 90, 93,  
     99-100, 103, 109, 116, 119, 122-6,  
     132, 137, 140-1  
 psyche, integration of 14, 31, 40-1, 52, 91,  
     106-8  
 psychoanalysis 5, 27, 97, 137  
 psychological types 53-96, 112-13,  
     127, 130, 138-40; *see also*  
     extraversion; feeling; introversion;  
     intuition; sensation; thinking  
 psychosis 59  
 psychotherapy 4-7; and Watchword 111,  
     139  
  
 pyramid, as symbol 19  
 rational-emotive therapy 5  
 regression, principle of 17-19, 28-35, 38-  
     9, 46-51  
 relationships, analysing personal 140-1;  
     *see also* developmental relationships;  
     dialectical relationships  
 religion 17-19, 21-6, 43-4, 60-2, 72, 96  
 repression 33, 41, 46-7, 54, 59-62  
 reversals, in matrix 34-5  
 right: handedness 20-1, 26-7; hemisphere  
     27-8; side of body 26-7; side of matrix  
     30-5, 105; as symbol 19-29  
  
 schools, of self-development 5-7  
 self: dynamic 51, 106-7; false 42-3, 46;  
     higher 43-4; idealized 45-6; inner 39-  
     41; Jungian 51, 103, 107-8, 120;  
     public 41-3, 104, 116-17; real 40;  
     realized 33, 52, 106-8, 120; sense of  
     49-50; static 49-50, 105, 107  
 self-analysis 13-4, 111, 137-8  
 self-consciousness 5  
 self-deception 6, 111  
 self-development 6-7; *see also*  
     development of self  
 self-knowledge 1-8  
 self-observation 4-7  
 self-realization 14, 28, 51-2, 103-8, 138  
 sensation 53-6; assessing 62-9;  
     extraverted 58, 65-7, 96; introverted  
     58-9, 67-9; repression of 60-1, 113,  
     126  
 sex differences 24-6, 44, 103-4; *see also*  
     anima; animus; female principle; male  
     principle; mana personality  
*Shadow* 30-3, 46-7, 100-3, 107-9, 114,  
     118-19, 121-2, 124, 132, 140; Jungian  
     41, 46, 103, 108  
 Sky Father 24, 44  
 Snake, as symbol 18  
 solar cult 21-6, 44  
*Soul* 30-3, 39-41, 99, 101, 103, 105, 108-  
     9, 114, 116, 121, 123-4, 132, 140  
 soul image 40-1, 103, 108; *see also* anima;  
     animus; *Soul*  
 south, as symbol 28-9

spatial metaphor 15-35, 137  
specialization, of brain function 27-8, 30  
*Spectre* 30-3, 48-9, 100-3, 108, 114, 119, 121-3, 132  
spine, as symbol 18, 24  
spirit, spirituality 17-19, 43-4; *see also*  
    mana personality  
spiritual traditions 4-7  
split-brain studies 27  
square, as symbol 15-17  
stages of life 90-1, 103-108, 113, 124  
*Station* 30-3, 49-50, 100-1, 103, 105-8, 115, 119-20, 123, 125, 132  
sun, as symbol 36-7; *see also* solar cult  
symbol: in matrix 12, 36-52; and  
    psychological integration 14, 28;  
    spatial 14-35  
  
testicles 24  
tests 1-4; and Watchword 138-9  
theme, of matrix 96, 113-14, 127-8, 131, 133, 138-9  
therapy *see* psychotherapy  
thinking 53-6; assessing 63; extraverted 60-1, 75-7; introverted 61, 77-9, 90; repression of 61  
Titans 24  
transactional analysis 5  
tree, as symbol 17-18  
triangle, as symbol 18-19  
types *see* psychological types  
  
unconscious: and *Guide* 43-5; and psychological types 54-7, 90-1; and *Shadow* 46-7, 118; and *Soul* 39-41; symbols of 22-9, 118; *see also* attitude; function; projection; repression  
Underworld 17, 22  
uniting symbol 14, 28-9  
up, as symbol 17-19, 28-35  
  
vertical dimension, symbolism of 17-19, 28-35  
  
Watchword: applications 138-41; compared with MBTI 92-93; development of vii-x, 13-14; evaluation of ix, 13-14, 137-8; and Jung vii-x, 13-14, 37, 106-8; purpose vii-x, 14; *see also* keys; matrix  
west, as symbol 22, 28-9  
Wise Old Man 44  
witchcraft 24; *see also* magic  
women's mysteries 22-4; *see also* female principle  
word association, in matrix 9-13, 30, 53, 99-100, 114-15, 137; *see also* amplification, free association  
  
Yggdrasil 18  
yoga 18, 24

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**Michael Daniels PhD** is a chartered psychologist with a longstanding interest in Jungian psychology, self-actualization, transpersonal psychology and psychical research. Now retired, he was formerly Senior Lecturer in Psychology and Co-director of the *Consciousness and Transpersonal Psychology Research Unit* at Liverpool John Moores University. He also trained and practised for six years as an honorary psychotherapist (psychodynamic) within the National Health Service. He is the author of more than 30 academic articles and chapters, and of *Shadow, Self, Spirit: Essays in Transpersonal Psychology* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2005). From 2007-2013 he was Editor of *Transpersonal Psychology Review* (Journal of the British Psychological Society Transpersonal Psychology Section).

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