

EDITOR'S FOREWORD

Eve's Agenda

It's pretty audacious for Donna and Paul to put a picture of Eve and the Apple on the front cover of a book about genetic evolution, and about how great and important seduction is while referencing a religious tradition, but knowing them well enough by now I'm not surprised that they have once again playfully combined into one compelling meme, a deep taboo and a very, very good point.

So, in this spirit, we'll ask a simple question. Who made the first move, ever? At least according to Genesis, it was a woman. Eve to Adam.

This is definitely not a book about The Book, but the poetic images of myth can express the wisdom of life in a way that reaches our innate intuition. So I'm going to pick up and turn over a few familiar stones of a story that we all know so well, there in the Garden of Eden, to see if we really knew it after all.

This is not supposed to be revisionist, but more like the rest of this book, an attempt at getting a clearer picture of something familiar by removing some of our inherited biases and assumptions. By removing a lens we didn't even know we were wearing. The exercise will also get you used to this book presenting other familiar things,

around courtship, mating, and the purpose of partnership, in a whole new light.

Please, if you need to swap out the clothes of these archetypes, in order to make this story more your own, feel free.

Let's begin with one of our culture's most insidious and unexamined beliefs. The kind that takes control of your perspective when you don't even realize it has. Like when you saw the front cover of this book.

That belief is that Eve got us all into this mess. That it's her fault we ate the Apple, which was the most bad thing ever. Understandably, believing this, we have been punishing her for it ever since. Whose fault was it really?

In those short, terse lines of Genesis, and it's really only a few dozen, God asks what happened. In brief, Adam passes the buck to Eve, Eve passes the buck to the serpent, God agrees with Eve, and the serpent gets cursed by God.

No divine principle curses Eve and Adam. It just levies the natural consequences of eating the red pill, and without blame. Almost like, "O.K. so if that's what you want, here's the deal, and here you go." In the original Hebrew there is nothing implying any emotional tone. God is not forcefully blaming or even reprimanding Eve.

But Adam (us guys), it appears, blamed (and still blame) Eve. The blame on women for "original sin" is so deep and unexamined that it has throughout history even been popular to portray the Eden serpent with breasts. So it wasn't just Eve, but meta-female herself. That bad, seductive female.

But really what was Eve's motivation? What in Heaven's name was she thinking? Was she weak willed, or did she make an instinctual choice (she had no knowledge of good and evil then) with her eyes wide open? Most people these days, if you ask, say without a

thought that Eve was overpowered by temptation. Women are the weaker sex after all, right?

Though she knew the potential consequences, Eve still made the decision to go ahead with eating the fruit. Then she somehow convinced/seduced Adam to join her, that all the pain they might go through would be worth it in the end.

They are expelled from Eden, and they land in the best school that we know of for learning of "Good" and "Evil", and of their fruits of "Pleasure" and "Pain". That school is our World.

It's common to see pictures of Adam and Eve weeping as they leave the Garden, in overwhelming regret. That too, like the blame on Eve, is an erroneous imputation, it's not in the story.

If we are to take this story as a mythic guide on its own terms, it's clear that living outside of the paradisiacal Eden has allowed Adam and Eve and their progeny to grow spiritually. It's hard, yes. But Eve seduced Adam into joining her in the decision to grow beyond their own ignorance. This is the key.

Is all this pain worth it? Are we to thank Eve for the Apple? Is it bitter? Sweet? Bittersweet?

Many women I speak with seem to instinctively think it is all worth it. Most men seem to be not so sure. And this is telling. But taken to its conclusion, the main loss in the Eden story, Adam and Eve's access to the fruits of the Tree of Life, is resolved in the end of Revelations when humans choose Good after gaining knowledge of the two options. When they're ripened enough.

Through the experiment and its travails we humans lift our status out of blissful ignorance and grow beyond ourselves. To, in the words of The Book, become as God.

Thanks, Eve.

Challenge #1: Trusting Eve's agenda

According to the story, this all only is good in the end if we meet the challenge - otherwise it's all for naught. And the first challenge is the Big One. Adam still seems to be stuck on it: It's the choice of how to perceive Eve.

Was she actually acting, deliberately, with a deep instinct? Or was she swayed by temptation? This is important: our entire relationship to the female, and our ability to accept her initiating intuition as a trustworthy guide, depends on this one perceptual choice.

I've decided to take a leap of faith and assume that Eve did know what she was doing. Believe me, I have fought that one for a long time, and it turns out that's a pretty common attitude for men. The last thing a certain part of me wants to do is come down to earth with a woman and meet her in the nitty-gritty and flesh and blood of human life. To accept her smells on their mysterious terms; to risk that I may even delight in them.

I was for years one of the most extreme cases of Solo Man on a Mission, jetting around the world with just a bag, and you can ask my past girlfriends: I was quite impossible to corner, at least for long. Incorporating the dominant mythos of my culture as my spiritual compass, in truth I treated the seduction of females, or the pull to earth of my own inner female, as the very obstacle I needed to overcome.

I saw Eve as weak, not wise. She, after all, was the initiator of "The Great Mistake" who was just oblivious that it even was a mistake. She was so far gone that it wasn't even worth speaking with her about it, she'd never understand.

But now when Eve hands me the Apple, I'm much more trusting. I have less suspicion. Why?

Something in me changed at some point - maybe it was the profound joy of the children in my life, or realizing that my creative energy was exponentiated by a healthy-minded female. Maybe because I choose to see that brightness in her eyes as honest, not some trick of a carnivorous plant. Or that I've lived quite fully so many solo wandering years that I'm ready. Maybe it's that a cherished and respected female's style of loving, both in its nurturing and its deep passion, resembles something I equate with a divine principle. Or maybe it's just that I'm hardwired to find her simply irresistible, and I've given up fighting it - on the road to working with it.

Maybe it's the perfect setup for a good reason.

Knowledge; who needs Knowledge anyways?

If it was Knowledge that Eve was after, and seduced us men into, I'm willing to risk laying down my halberd and meet the possibility that this is still going on. That she still is driven, by her nature and divine commission, to seduce men into Knowledge.

I am willing to do this because it appears that she may be acting in alignment with my own goals, albeit from another angle I can't understand on my own. I have come to believe that she can seduce us into exactly the kind of knowledge that is required to save this world and bring us as a species into harmony with the rest of the planet. The knowledge of differentiating between what is life supporting, and what is life destroying. The knowledge of Good and Evil. You know, the kind of knowledge that many men have quite obviously ignored - for a long time, by the looks of the planet under their watch - as a matter of tradition.

It is no surprise to me that men have used every trick in the book and every power play possible to keep themselves from feeling that they need to listen to woman's message of knowledge. That acknowledgment alone would require men to change themselves.

By simply making women wrong, for millennia, we can justify not listening, and thus not doing, the inner work. I'm not surprised, because I have a man's mind and I know how it operates.

I currently believe that it's partly because, despite our innate hero's call to courage, men hesitate to truly feel the fullness of reality. That it's scary to feel the knowledge of Good and Evil; we're daunted by the responsibility and even the rewards of living up to its standards. Also, I sense that many of us men are very uncomfortable with our own innate completeness, uncomfortable with the idea that we are in truth part female.

Adam, Androgen, and the Inner Androgyne

Adam's rib aside, at least biologically speaking men come from women, and not just in birth. A human fetus always begins its life as a 'female'. It becomes a male due to the presence of the hormone androgen, regulated by the presence of a "Y" chromosome given by the father; a chromosome which the female can't give. But at that sex crossroads, it is not a choice of androgen or estrogen that makes a fetus 'female'. It's a choice of adding androgen, or just carrying on with what's there.

Yes men, I'm sorry to break it to you, that no matter how tough you are, you are in a sense a female + androgen, which we call 'male'. 'Female' is in fact the biological base template of a human being.

In Jungian terms, there is a corollary to this in our minds, and these female qualities of our psyche are called our Anima. The male qualities, the Animus. We all have both. Just like the debatably androgynous God of the Bible.

Michael Meade, the gifted mythologist shared some words about the Anima from which we might divine Eve's agenda, and her modus operandi : "Anima is an old name for Soul. Because Soul tends to have a feminine tone. Anima has issues. Anima is trying to intrigue us into the important issues in our life. Soul is not looking

for simple comfort. It is looking for a complicated way of being deeply touched and moved by the world. And the Soul will get us into trouble in order to get us to change. The changes that are going on now, and the great troubles of the world, from the point of view of the Soul, are here to help us transform, and become ourselves. Because that's our only real job in this world. To allow our own soul to lead us into the transformation, and at the end be more fully ourselves, a more descended human and more complete person, able to act in concert with cultural imagination and with the cycling and flow of nature.”

If this is Eve's agenda, I feel it's due that we give her, at long last, a chance to lead us where it's her place to lead. It may even be crucial to our survival.

This is, in the end, her experiment after all.

Shall we take a bite?

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