

THE  
UNDISCOVERED  
SELF: THE  
DILEMMA OF THE  
INDIVIDUAL IN  
MODERN SOCIETY

*by Carl Gustav Jung*

INSIGHTS BY:

Ivaylo Durmonski

FORMAT:

Deluxe PDF printable

# COPYRIGHTS

Exclusively for members, this deluxe printable is made possible by members - thank you! The benefit of this material is twofold: Help you better concentrate so you can fully immerse in the words. And, escape the online attention monsters. If you think someone you know can gain from this downloadable, you can direct them to my membership page:

*[durmonski.com/membership](http://durmonski.com/membership)*

Thanks again for the support!

# CONTENTS

ABOUT AND HIGHLIGHTS

ABSTRACT AND CORE IDEA

KEY LESSONS

ACTIONABLE NOTES

COMMENTARY

NOTABLE QUOTES

WORKSHEET

## ABOUT:

This is a comprehensive summary of the book *The Undiscovered Self: The Dilemma of the Individual in Modern Society* by Carl Gustav Jung. Covering the key ideas and proposing practical ways for achieving what's mentioned in the text. Written by book fanatic and online librarian Ivaylo Durmonski. (Printable available only for supporting members.)

## HIGHLIGHTS:

- We make intrinsically wrong conclusions about people because we look at statistical data showing an abstract reflection of the general population.
- If our inner desires are continuously suppressed, we'll never find joy and satisfaction.
- Expressing what art portrays and actually creating art is telling about the person. It's a way to let your inner self take control and voice itself.

## ABSTRACT:

Born in the aftermath of World War 2, The Undiscovered Self wants to aid humanity by preventing further catastrophic developments in the world. Carl Jung, by helping the individual resolve his inner clashes, wants to liberate him from the totalitarian regimes.

According to Jung, confronting oneself is the only way we can resolve the conflicts happening on the world stage as only a change in the attitude of the individual can ignite a change in the psychology of the nation.

## THE CORE IDEA:

The recurring theme of the book is how individuality is often misinterpreted and neglected because it's observed by the lens of the general, not individual understanding. You can't clearly sense the real character in the surrounding people, because you compare them to others which corrupts your judgment about the individual person. Therefore, the more you isolate yourself from what you know, the better you'll understand what you don't know about yourself and others. This self-knowledge, as presented in the book, is foundational for cleansing the dogmatic oppressors and elevating the fate of the individual human being.

## 5

# KEY LESSONS FROM THE UNDISCOVERED SELF:

- LESSON #1: TO UNDERSTAND OURSELVES WE MUST LOOK AT OURSELVES, UNBIASED
- LESSON #2: WE MISINTERPRET OTHERS BECAUSE WE TREAT THEM BASED ON AVERAGE DATA
- LESSON #3: NOT UNRAVELING OUR UNCONSCIOUS DESIRES WILL LEAD TO MISERY
- LESSON #4: THE UNDISCOVERED SELF IS VEILED BY OUR ABILITY TO LEARN
- LESSON #5: SELF-EXPRESSION HELP US ILLUMINATE OUR DARK SIDE

LESSON #1:

# TO UNDERSTAND OURSELVES WE MUST LOOK AT OURSELVES, UNBIASED

When we meet someone new, we are quick to make conclusions based on the observable facts about the person – gender, race, nationality, looks, our previous experiences. But these only delude us. We start to appoint attributes to people who don't actually possess them. Or, we fail to spot the uniqueness of the person because of the same initial false conclusions.

Carl Jung explains that you can authentically understand a person only if you turn your back on everything that is known about man since he existed.

We should take the same unbiased approach to reveal our inner selves. Try to look deep within ourselves without allowing known social attitudes to cloud our thinking.

We are confused, though.

We confuse knowledge – what we know about the world – with “self-knowledge”- what we know about ourselves. We mistakenly categorize our own inner contents because we’re biased. All of this, because we measure ourselves by taking into account the people around us. The environment we know.

Based on the text, “thanks” to this biased approach, we create a false self-image about ourselves which further buries the important parts of our psyche. What’s inside us remains hidden from us because we analyze ourselves based only on what is known, what is available to us.

And what is available to us further damages our ability to understand ourselves.

What does this mean?

The abstracted examples are quite common for Jung. But in general, what the author wants to explain is that all the decisions we make are based on our own facts and observations – what we know. But since what we know about the world is not all that is available as knowledge, we usually end up not addressing the situation accordingly.

The real problem is when nations rely solely on general conclusions based on statistics.

Since theories and analyses are based on observations, they are statistical. Meaning that they cannot, never, represent and touch our real self. They are a mere reflection of averages that



aim to showcase a single point of view that is based on everyone but actually not helping anyone. It's an abstraction, a deviation of reality that sounds good on paper, but it can hardly help an individual to determine his place in the world.

A simple example is this: the average pay of the nation can be \$50,000 annually. But this doesn't mean that everyone is getting this amount. Not at all. Rich people influence the average number greatly which means that there are a lot of poor people. However, nations, governments, etc., don't look at individuals, they look at statistics.

The same simple method applies to everything about humans – how people think and behave.

Therefore, the undiscovered self remains undiscovered. The more we look at data and seek answers in external sources, the more we infect our minds with theories that are not close to ourselves but close to an abstract reality of what a person looks like and how he thinks.

If we want to look behind the curtain of our apparent psyche, we can only do so if we approach this task with a free and open mind. Absent from statistical analysis.

The problem, as described in the book, is that making conclusions about people is hard without at least partly relying on knowledge about mankind in general.

*“But the psychology of the individual corresponds to the*

*psychology of the nation. What the nation does is done also by each individual, and so long as the individual does it, the nation also does it. Only the change in the attitude of the individual is the beginning of the change in the psychology of the nation.”*

*Carl Jung*

## LESSON #2:

# WE MISINTERPRET OTHERS BECAUSE WE TREAT THEM BASED ON AVERAGE DATA

Individuals need an individual approach.

To understand and cure a sick person you should keep an eye on what you know while simultaneously not allowing what you know to jeopardize or interfere with your authentic judgment about a patient – or a situation.

For example, knowing the general personality types can allow you to place a person into a specific category which will help you, probably, uncover some additional traits about him. However, this knowledge can also corrupt your point of view and disallow you from “seeing” the unrepresented – the hidden.

The more statistically based the treatment is and the more it's based on general knowledge, the more the personal healing will fail. Not that your approach will be necessarily wrong, but because it's incredibly general and not attuned to the actual

individual.

In these situations, a lot of times, the knowledge the doctor has - something that should be positive - is harmful, not helpful for the patient.

And this is just an introduction to the bigger issue mentioned in the book. Not only doctors are not appropriately treating patients, but also the State and the Church while serving their crowds.

The State treats the individual based on average data. But since the gathered information is not even close to the likes and the needs of the psyche of the individual, he feels misunderstood. And how could he be not?

Individuality gets lost in the collection of data. While data about the population is based on individuals, a single authentic person is always far from the “unreal ideal” presented in the statistic the State operates.

It's assumed that statistics is the representation of the nation while it's actually just a glimpse of what's really happening in the minds of the people.

This causes the following conflict: A single person is treated as a social unit based on average data. Therefore, always misunderstood and underappreciated.

This conflict can only be solved by a two-way thinking model: Doing one thing while at the same time not losing sight of the

other possibilities (i.e., taking into consideration the data but also being aware that data is fragile and can't showcase the uniqueness of the person, situation, etc.).

*“The individual is increasingly deprived of the moral decision as to how he should live his own life, and instead is ruled, fed, clothed, and educated as a social unit, accommodated in the appropriate housing unit, and amused in accordance with the standards that give pleasure and satisfaction to the masses.” Carl Jung*

## LESSON #3:

# NOT UNRAVELING OUR UNCONSCIOUS DESIRES WILL LEAD TO MISERY

Good teachers and professionally trained doctors possess the ability to look at people beyond the visible and the conscious. They can penetrate and see patients from the perspective of the things they most desire in this world. And according to Jung, our desires can be categorized into the following two classes: sexual satisfaction and self-assertion.

We want to prove to ourselves by proving to others that we are worthy citizens of this world and that we deserve the attention and the importance we receive. Everyone alive is subjected to want these two things and he/she should be examined through this prism upon interaction.

However, this also means that people won't directly admit that they want these things – to be praised and admired. They are unconsciously desired. Often hidden beneath layers of other things that exist to make the individual seem more focused on

the outside people, not himself, even though it's completely the opposite.

Regardless of our background and appearance, a chief object of ours is to attract favorable attention. Everyone wants to be seen as great and noble. Admired and desired by others.

Oftentimes, though, a person will neglect his inner longings and focus solely on helping others. This usually happens so he can satisfy his need to gain attention and acceptance from others.

However, if this becomes habitual, he will start to heavily neglect his unconscious desires and what the rest of the self wants – self-expression. This becomes a problem at some point but it only reveals itself as a problem when, as Carl Jung puts it, “consciousness is no longer able to neglect or suppress his instinctual side.”

If our separation from our real desires is put on hold and/or buried, we will never feel real satisfaction. Only search for new ways to make contributions so we can feel good.

But the opposite behavior – of the individual who appears noble but he's actually interested only in himself – is not necessarily better.

While trying to appear as more concerned about others – but actually caring more about himself and his individual needs – a person creates a split personality.

We put smiles on our faces. We explain that we want to help. That we want to contribute. While inside, we strategically plot the potential gains from the situation.

In either case, the behavior is powered by our inner desire to gain attention, satisfy our yearnings, and promote our views.

So what does this mean?

That real joy happens only when we take steps towards revealing the hidden layers of our inner desires, understand them, and befriend our unconscious. But all of this, shouldn't happen at the expense of others. Meaning that we shouldn't use others for our own ends gains.

*“The clash between these two fundamental instincts (preservation of the species and self-preservation) is the source of numerous conflicts. They are, therefore, the chief object of moral judgment, whose purpose it is to prevent instinctual collisions as far as possible.” Carl Jung*



## LESSON #4:

# THE UNDISCOVERED SELF IS VEILED BY OUR ABILITY TO LEARN

Our ability to learn more about the world hinders our ability to learn more about ourselves.

The more an individual progresses in life and the more he sees, the more he understands about the outside world but, sadly, the more he neglects the inside world of himself.

The task of understanding facts, often not at all related to his persona, becomes all-consuming. So he forgets about himself and even stops wanting to get to know himself.

Even worse, an individual becomes so interested in satisfying his primal needs and the needs of the people around him that he forgets to seek and understand his unconscious self – what the person actually wants.

The more the unconscious – referred to as the shadow – is

neglected, the more we start to lose sight of the shadow itself.

If this continues, we reach a state in our understanding, which is also heavily adopted by the *le mass* (population in general), that there is no such thing as psyche. No such thing as inner self.

But simply because we cannot see our psyche – for us, it's a mere air and of no importance – doesn't mean it doesn't exist and doesn't hurt us when we don't take steps to heal it. We do, in fact, damage our inner self further.

How exactly?

First, we think that our mental disorders can be fixed with words. We try to talk our way out of the rut by sharing our problems with others. And while these things do help, they cannot fully liberate us if we don't actually take the time to talk to ourselves – understand what we actually want.

The second, bigger problem, is that our consciousness holds certain external objects so tightly that we fail to see past them.

And here, by objects, Carl Jung is not referring only to physical things, but also to religion and the State.

A religious person often hands out the ownership of his body and mind to God. For him, God decides, not himself. And that's just part of the problem.

Similar things happen if we expect too much from the State,

from our current leaders, as well as from our neighbors and our friends. All this contributes to the narrowing of our focus and our inability to understand ourselves.

We think that only by acquiring more of everything we can free ourselves from the oppressing condition and eventually (finally) become masters of our own life.

However, the more we focus on objects (this also includes joining different groups and movements), the more we neglect the inner self that needs care and attention. Carl Jung explains that only the unconscious has the power to liberate us. Everything depends on our inner hygiene.

Triumph over the psyche can happen by looking deep down inside us. When we stop observing the ever-expanding outer world and look at our inner self.

*“All the same, nobody can deny that without the psyche there would be no world at all, and still less a human world. Virtually everything depends on the human psyche and its functions. It should be worthy of all the attention we can give it, especially today, when everyone admits that the weal or woe of the future will be decided neither by the threat of wild animals, nor by natural catastrophes, nor by the danger of world-wide epidemics, but simply and solely by the psychic changes in man.” Carl Jung*

## LESSON #5:

# SELF-EXPRESSION HELP US ILLUMINATE OUR DARK SIDE

We believe that what we know about ourselves is the only thing in ourselves.

If there is harm done in the world, we quickly appoint it to the “other”. To someone outside of ourselves. If we have done something bad in the past, we will usually quickly reject our involvement in the scene and move on with ourselves. Either bury the memory somewhere deep so we can forget about our wrongdoings or craft an excuse story about our dark side.

We avoid remembering these internal malicious thoughts for a good reason. We don't want to feel bad about ourselves and we don't want to accept that what we're doing is somehow hurting us or others around us.

That's why the shadow, as Jung calls it, is never revealed. Never search for and never explored. Assuming that it's something bad

and talking about it will further demonize our persona.

But that's not what Carl Jung believed. With his work, he wants to motivate more people to explore their inner selves. To bring forward their dark motives. Because only by revealing the shadow we can spot our imperfections and "touch" our real selves.

The problem as it might become apparent by the previous lessons is the following: man is not what he knows about himself nor what others tell him about himself. He is more. But exploring the unconscious can't happen from the conscious.

And the second argument is that strong individuals will never feel the need for inner exploration. They will quickly dismiss the idea that there is some sort of shadow self trying to appear from the inside.

On the other hand, though, the weak do need help. And they most commonly seek such from the "perfect". Even if this is not directly expressed. They nonetheless are influenced by others and do their best to mimic the moves of the successful.

Carl Jung explains that we all need to know more about ourselves than what we already know.

"How this can happen?" of course, is the next logical question.

The proposed solution looks very simple, at least on the surface.

Art. Both the creation and the observation of art.

Observing the abstract aesthetic forms presented on a canvas can provide the needed psychological education society needs. After all, all great art gets created by the unconscious man living within the conscious. What you see and what you create when you leave yourself to sketch (write, perform, sing) freely can say a lot about you.

*“Great art till now has always derived its fruitfulness from myth, from the unconscious process of symbolization which continues through the ages and, as the primordial manifestation of the human spirit, will continue to be the root of all creation in the future.” Carl Jung*

## ACTIONABLE NOTES:

- **Talk to the inner man:** Our knowledge about the world and our desire to blend in with the crowd prevents us from understanding our true selves. Even worse, we don't think that there is part of ourselves that is being oppressed or left unexplored. We see the conscious, the outside, as the only thing that forms our persona. But Carl Jung says otherwise. We are a duplex, not simplex. There is part of us that is hidden, lurking in the shadows. Usually, the irrational human being in us is being ignored while he is actually the true self. Wanting to be understood, accepted, and revealed. That's why, it's worth asking ourselves how our inner person feels about the things we do in the outside world.
- **Approach people as individuals:** It's common to fall into the trap of looking at statistics to make a decision. Especially if you're a doctor and you're treating a patient. While the facts can guide you in your way of understanding the illness, they will surely mislead you when you have to treat the person, the individual. A sick person requires individual understanding. A complicated situation is no different. Regardless of the conditions. The knowledge you know can be both a blessing and a curse. It's dangerous to rely only on what is visible, you should always approach situations and people by forcefully ignoring the things we see and trying to imagine what is invisible to the eye.
- **Unity with others, not with the State:** The State promotes unity but not with others, but with the State. That's why the common man feels terrorized, isolated, and alone. The dictator State, is to blame for this as it has no intention to advertise the thriving

relationship between people. As Jung writes, “The more unrelated individuals are, the more consolidated the State becomes, and vice versa.” This means that people should strive to connect more closely to each other in order to protect their rights and individuality. The kind of unity that is embedded in the Christian doctrine – love your neighbor. But by love, Jung really means love. Accept your neighbor as he is and don’t try to change him, or compare his deeds with some perfect idealistic demands. People who think are perfect don’t need others, therefore, are not willing to unite and help each other. Cleansing this idea of perfection will lead to thriving relationships between individuals and groups.

- **Self-knowledge is the ultimate knowledge:** The only way we can prevent catastrophic events from happening is by resolving the conflicts within us, within the individual. Carl Jung argues that self-knowledge is the path towards a brighter future. So much depends on our growth as a species, so much depends on our care and attention, that if we don’t understand our inner desires and our inner self, we will never progress and preserve the world we live in. Without self-knowledge, there can be no growth. The ills of society and the destructive forces that plague us are due to a lack of reflection or willingness to do personal work. But how can one know oneself? The starting point is recognizing his imperfections. Recognition of the inner shadow can uncover some important truths about a person.
- **Avoid large communities:** The bigger the crowd gets, the less helpful it becomes. The focus becomes a goal that is not at all focused on the individual needs, but on an idea that is presented by a leader who simply knows how to manipulate the masses. This concept creates an important conclusion that requires our attention: We can only survive in the world if we are willing to



give away a portion of our individuality. After all, we can't create a fully functional state on our own. So the question is: Is this all worth it? Few people can "escape" the State and go live in the woods on their own (not needing anything from others). After all, we need other people and communities to advance in life (plus jobs, hospitals, protection, etc.). However, the important thing here is that we're asking the question and considering our options. If we don't reach this realization - that mass movements are robbing us of ourselves - we'll always live a delusional reality. In other words, the question has already been answered for us. We will join groups hoping to feel more ourselves not knowing that we are actually further distancing ourselves from our real desires.

## COMMENTARY

We all have responsibilities. We have families, friends, we participate in communities where our participation is of some importance. Others rely on us and need our helping hand so we can all move together and thrive. Moreover, the State and the religious settlements depend on our votes so they can form a mass movement.

However, the cultural hierarchy created and powered by the State is sadly working to our disadvantage. Our responsibility to take care of ourselves is replaced by constantly taking care of others and their interest – never actually figuring out what "I want" and "what is good for me."

This might sound egoistic and neglectful for the surrounding people

– and it actually might be. But the focus in the book is more on self-exploration and understanding ourselves, so we can improve ourselves.

The Undiscovered Self is a call to action. A book urging readers to explore themselves from within. To prevent our existence from being objectified and places in the socially constructed roles that are meant to fulfill the happiness of others, the chiefs, not our own wishes.

The core message of this book aims to explain that individually matters and that it should be explored and cherished. Paradoxically, the laws and the parties that are supposedly helping individuals are actually focusing on attracting even more followers – to amass even more power for themselves, careless of the individuals constituting their party.

The Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst warn us that we'll never find inner satisfaction if we rely on outside forces for help. The State and the religious movements we are forced to obey don't care about the individual. And thus, the "individual" is replaced by the "mass."

Plainly, you are responsible to take care of your inner desires and stop constantly trying to satisfy the needs of the outsiders."

Key takeaways:

1. Public organizations are more interested in amassing more and more people, not caring about the individuals forming the group. That's why communities as a whole are fragile, and the opposite of helpful. They create mass-mindedness which destroys

individualism. We become a mere abstract number in the bureau of statistics. A real fundamental change can happen in private and intimate conversations and private and intimate groups. Where there is sifting through.

2. The paradox of the text is that weak individuals need support from the strong to flourish. Conversely, strong individuals use the weak, careless of their real desires for their own selfish needs. The examples are countless – children need support from parents, employees need a job, citizens need politicians. The solution here is not easily achievable – explore yourself to build a resilient inner character.

## NOTABLE QUOTES:

*“The State in particular is turned into a quasi-animate personality from whom everything is expected. In reality it is only a camouflage for those individuals who know how to manipulate it.” Carl Jung*

*“I can therefore see it only as a delusion when the Churches try—as they apparently do—to rope the individual into some social organization and reduce him to a condition of diminished responsibility, instead of raising him out of the torpid, mindless mass and making clear to him that he is the one important factor and that the salvation of the world consists in the salvation of the individual soul.” Carl Jung*

*“Firstly, the individual psyche, just because of its individuality, is an exception to the statistical rule and is therefore robbed of one of its main characteristics when subjected to the levelling influence of statistical evaluation. Secondly, the Churches grant it validity only in so far as it acknowledges their dogmas—in other words, when it submits to a collective category. In both cases the will to individuality is regarded as egotistic obstinacy.” Carl Jung*

# WORKSHEET

Reading alone won't help you understand the actionable notes. You need to engage with the content. Answer the question below to plan your next steps:

*1/ Ask your inner person: "How do you feel about the things happening outside?"*

*2/ Try to imagine what is invisible to the eye when you're dealing with people:*

*3/ Do you accept people with "defects" in your circle? Or, do you try to change them?*

*4/ To grow, talk openly with yourself about your inner conflicts. What do you lack?*

*5/ Do you participate in large movements (religions, parties, etc.)? Why?*

# THANKS FOR READING!

*Ivaylo Durmonski*

