

UnBoxing “God” - Episode Ten.Five (#10.5)

Jung’s concepts of the Anima and Animus

And Toxic Masculinity and Femininity

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McCall: [00:00:00] Hello friends. It's McCall... back with another bonus episode of UnBoxing “God”. Today, we're going to unbox Carl Jung's archetypes of the animus and the anima and our concepts of feminine and masculine. I've always had a strong fascination with that intersection that exists somewhere between sex and gender and sexuality to the extent that I pursued a master's degree in the study of it. But along the way, I also suspect that I picked up an invisible load of charged opinions. This podcast is all an attempt to unbox the ideas that trigger my fight-or-flight response and to present those concepts without any influence to myself or anybody else who cares to listen.

[00:01:06] I'm not sure I'd be able to be so unbiased and detached from this particular subject. Therefore, I thought it best to do this week's unboxing work with a lesson opinionated partner. [00:01:19] Since I first invited her husband, Ryan, to enlighten us regarding stoicism, Cassidy has become a regular contributor to this show from show notes, to exhaustive conversations, where we play devil's advocate for one another in an attempt to keep open minds, Cassidy has evolved into a sort of significant other for my personal journey toward emotional and spiritual maturity. [00:01:45] Plus we both sometimes managed to indulge our immaturity along the way. You'll be hearing from her throughout this episode, throughout this episode, and many more to come. We hope.

[00:01:56] They say it takes a village to raise a child. And so that is what I'm building here, a village, but to raise my inner child, I enthusiastically encourage you to join our village. Cass and I are at work creating a platform where, if you'd like, you could support the show and gain access to behind the scenes goodies, full interviews.

[00:05:03] We've also decided to invite supporters to a monthly conference call where Cass and I and maybe the occasional guest will help you unbox the concepts you're wrestling with. More on this to come - subscribe now and stay tuned, but let's get to anima and animus.

[00:02:44] **What IS Animus?**

[00:02:44] Animus originated from Latin, where it was used to describe ideas such as the rational soul, life, mind, mental powers, courage or desire. In the early 19th century animus was used to mean "temper" and it was typically used in a hostile sense. In 1923, it began being used as a term in Jungian psychology to describe the masculine side of women.

[00:03:20] Animus originated from Latin, where it was used to describe ideas such as the rational soul, life, mind, mental powers, courage, or desire. In the early 19th century animus was used to mean "temper", and it was typically used in the hostile sense. However in 1923, it began being used as a term in Jungian psychology, to describe the masculine side of women.

[00:03:53] **What's Anima, then?!?! [Cassidy]**

[00:03:53] **cass:** So, the anima archetype appears in men. And, get this: It's his primordial image of woman. It represents the man's sexual expectation of women but also is a symbol of a man's possibilities or his contra-sexual tendencies.

[00:04:14] So, in the earlier writings of Carl Jung, the anima was a person's innermost being, which is in closest contact with the unconscious, and is contrasted with the persona or the externally directed part of a person. But in Jung's later writings, the anima is considered an archetype that represents the universal feminine characteristics... or the unconscious feminine aspect of the male psyche.

[00:04:49] **Intro to Billy -> Alison Whiteacre**

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[00:04:49] **McCall:** When it comes to gender roles, I think I've always balanced somewhere on the line. At an early age, BMX and skateboards, chemistry kits and mechanical workings - those were the things that quickly eclipsed Barbies, when it came to my attention.

I can recall equal fascination with, and even attraction to, classmates of both genders, as far back as I can recall. But I realized somewhere in college that what really intrigued me were folks who couldn't be clearly defined. Projection, perhaps, because I felt I could not be definitively labeled either? I don't know, but regardless of reason, I found my 25-year-old self fresh out of Ohio University on the big bustling, exciting streets of Hollywood, California. And it was here where I truly began to explore with zero limitations. So it's no surprise that when I met a musician named Billy who played and lived with passion and well beyond definition, we hooked up. Since those days of the late nineteen-nineties, we've seen very little of one another; however, in the last few years, that's changed. Actually in the last few years, a lot of things have changed when it comes to Billy. In fact, he's not Billy at all. She is Alison and I just could not resist using this episode on anima and animus as an excuse to reach out and ask some questions that I've always been curious about. So say, hello, Alison.

[00:06:38] **Here's Alison...**

[00:06:38] **Alison:** Hello, everyone!

[00:06:39] **McCall:** Alison, tell us a little bit about yourself - who are you? What do you do? What do you like? What are you interested in?

[00:06:48] **Alison:** I am a life purpose and transition coach. So I help people when they're going through major changes in their life, when old constructs don't work anymore and it can be a pretty scary time and pretty confusing. There is a lot of juicy opportunity for growth during this time. But there's also a lot of possibility for being anxious and possibly depressed because you're letting go, you have to let go - something is not working anymore. So, I help people that have big dreams realize what has been getting in their way of moving forward, and set up a life that really fires them up.

[00:07:27] **McCall:** So you help people transition?

[00:07:28] **Alison:** I help people transition. So, it could be people that are about to retire. It could be people that have burned out on a career that they've had and they just can't do it any longer. They've lost the fire in the belly. It's not fun to wake up every morning. They don't want to get out of bed. And I help people that are at the end of a relationship, and they're needing to put their lives back together again, without this particular person in their life so they need help sorting out where they go now that things have changed so dramatically. That could be in an intimate relationship or a marriage, or it could be empty nesters - the kids have gone out, and so much of the purpose of the day-to-day activities of the parents has gone with them. Basically, when staying the same becomes more painful than making dramatic changes in your life...? That's when I help people make the decisions that make it easier. I help them discover the things that they've been telling themselves that are not true - limiting beliefs, the inner critic... work with all that magical stuff.

[00:08:32] **Alison's 4 Phases of Change... or, playing a hand of cards.**

I think of the cycle of change as being in four parts, and the analogy is a deck of cards - playing a card game - so the four stages are: tossing in your hand, shuffling, dealing the hand, and playing the hand.

[00:08:46]] I usually start with working with people after they are sick of playing the hand, of whatever cycle that they're going through. And we go through these cycles in all aspects of our life... but the kind of cycles that I'm talking about are the ones where there's major change and some upheaval. And it can be a time of anxiety, of depression, becoming more insular. That's where we need to start looking at: What is really going on right now? Honestly, what is

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really happening? Where are you? And, so people take stock on where they're at. And then, towards the end of that period of time, there's a little bit of interest in trying to find out what's next.

[00:09:24] So, if it's somebody who has broken up with somebody, there's a fair amount of grieving that has to go along with it. Or if it's somebody who is just bored to tears with their job, and they have to, at some point, make a commitment to move forward. Then, that's when the "shuffle" part comes. When you're starting to put things together and get your team together and maybe get some education, that's the time of licking your wounds.

[00:09:50] We can't just let go. And we can't just change on a dime. There's a process. And I help people make that process as painless as possible, and also to help them realize that it is a normal part of the process.

[00:10:01] **McCall:** What is a core myth - a lie - that we tell ourselves that do make for a difficult transition? I know resilience is a key to a smoother transition, from one thing to another. So, what are the blocks that you've seen in your profession?

[00:10:24] **Alison:** Limiting beliefs and the inner critic. You can't get rid of your inner critic. You just have to train it. You have to repurpose it. At the core, the inner critic is developed early on in life, designed to keep us safe and small. It all boils down to: I'm not good enough. And it comes in different shapes and sizes. I'm not masculine enough. I'm not pretty enough. I'm not smart enough. My inner critic is I'm not smart enough and I'm not stupid, but I developed this innercritic of not being smart because of school - this school wasn't designed to be able to work with somebody like me. So, that's my inner critic.

[00:11:02] **Don't ya' ever want to get kind of "Butch", Alison?**

[00:11:02] **McCall:** I'm curious, how do you, or do you, have any desire to indulge in the more masculine...? Do you ever want to get kind of "Butch"?

[00:11:13] **Alison:** I don't, I don't particularly care to, at the moment... I think, uh, you know, now I know for a fact that girls have more fun... for sure. Uh, like, a TON more fun, cause you don't have to like, you know, "Is that okay for a guy to do?" I can do whatever I want! Just like women can wear whatever they want. They can express themselves in a masculine-Butch way. And she's just a tomboy - just the kind of sexism that comes with this masculinity thing is that there's a, there's an advantage to being a woman in that you can wear anything. You can express your heart, or you can be a hard ass, you know, you might get called a bitch, but you can still do all... all of these things are sort of within the spectrum of being female. Whereas the male spectrum is very narrow - and that sucks.

[00:12:09] I'm having so much fun being a woman that I don't really care to do that, but that doesn't mean that I won't get there. I have only been on hormones for three and a half years. And I just notice, over time, I'm not thinking about being trans... I'm just not thinking about it as much. When you're going through this awkward stage of transitioning and you can't just go from one thing to the other and then be done with it because obviously we're always transitioning. For me, with transitioning careers and transitioning genders, there's all of these extra things to be paying attention to, which I actually consciously get to do. I get to pay attention to these things.

[00:12:49] **McCall:** I believe that any character trait, any of them, have a spectrum and that both ends of that spectrum look like a character defect. But, that when it's in balance, the character trait doesn't have a judgment, good or bad. That anywhere in the middle, there's a lot more balance and it becomes an incredible asset. The thing that I thought was so amazingly sexy about you on my personal level was that balance that you somehow straddled and now Alison is highly gendered. Do you agree with that?

[00:13:26] **Alison:** Pretty female. Pretty female. I...yeah.

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[00:13:29] **McCall:** Highly. I mean, more female than I am by far.

[00:13:32] **Alison:** It's also, really new. I just started my study of gender identity in 2014. So when I heard the term gender fluid and then that just got me going into this thing. And then I always thought I was gender fluid and, in discussion groups or whatever, when people say their pronouns, I would, he, her, she, they, them, whatever. Non-binary Billy was my name. but it wasn't until I started, realizing that there was something that I just couldn't change with soul searching and study. And I wondered if that was something that would get handled if I started hormone therapy. And I happened to know a gender doctor at the time. And I texted him and said, "Hey, I'm thinking that I'd like to try estrogen." His wife is a sexologist, and they were both like, "Yeah, we were just wondering what took you so long." It was mind blowing. It was like, Oh my God, I am enough. I am enough. It's like that missing puzzle piece. When I suppressed the testosterone in my body and upped the estrogen, I just felt like I'd come down to earth. I just landed. That's when I started on this separation from being non-binary, to, really embracing feminine full on.

Sometimes I get these little feelings that are maybe, like, a memory of the masculine, and... I'm not a big fan. It's a visceral thing. It's just... like, I just feel like I'm being myself now, and that I will naturally be to some degree non-binary, but I don't really walk around thinking about masculine and feminine. I'm just being myself now.

[00:15:15] When I started my transition, there was what a lot of people call dysphoria. It's this feeling like your, your body and your mind and your spirit just don't line up together. And, that's the diagnosis that you get, if you want to transition with hormones - you get diagnosed as having this 'disease': dysphoria. and I never really, I mean, I just thought it was like, Okay, so I have dysphoria. I never really felt like I had dysphoria, but there would be times when I would feel maybe a little masculine - more masculine than normal, and I didn't enjoy it as much as feeling feminine. Like, there's just no way that I could really be very masculine at this point.

[00:15:59] **Alison's Final Golden Nuggets of Wisdom**

[00:15:59] **McCall:** Okay. Before we say goodbye, are there any little golden nuggets of wisdom that you feel. You've found throughout your life travel. Like, if you had to write down a tool, and put it in a time capsule and send it back to Jung you... what do you think are some of the most important things?

[00:16:18] **Alison:** Clearly, the most significant for me - to learn how to love myself. Cause I couldn't love myself. I was always very critical of other people. So, when I realized the correlation between me judging others and me judging myself - when it just became painful, I became painfully aware of it.

[00:16:40]] I came up with a life hack. Basically, it's a three step process. I love myself. I forgive myself. Then, with attention and focus and admiration: I love you for being you. And the thing that I was criticizing, all of a sudden, now I see as... that's just awesome and it's different. It's just different. So that has been huge. You know, you can never lose being judgemental, but you can certainly cut way down on it.

[00:17:10] **McCall:** [00:23:56] Alison, thank you so much for your time. Before you go, will you share where people can find you or learn more about you or inquire about your services.

[00:17:19] **Alison:** [00:24:06] Yes. Alisonwhiteacre.com. So, it's A L I - so one L - S O N W H I T E A C R E .com. And, Facebook it's Alison white acre... one L. And my email address is alison@alisonwhiteacre.com.

[00:17:39] **McCall:** [00:24:25] Thank you so much for hanging out with us, and sharing yourself.

[00:17:43] **Alison:** [00:24:28] My pleasure... Bye!

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Toxic Gender Roles: McCall and Cass

[00:17:52] **McCall:** Remember when about 15 minutes ago at the top of this episode, I told you about those hour long conversations that, that I've had with Cassidy in order to reason things out and overcome some of the stumbling blocks that I've encountered in this adventure of making a podcast? Well, it took us more than two hours this week to wrestle through the idea of toxic femininity?

[00:18:12] Well, it took us well over two hours recently to wrestle through the ideas of feminine and masculine and. Especially toxic femininity, but I think we finally did reach a comfortable consensus, at least just for today. I'll let Cassidy give you the story from her point of view, and then I'll let you be a fly on the wall and listen in on that very conversation! We recorded it! And I think we'll record many more.

[00:18:39] **Cass' reactive issue with Toxic Femininity**

[00:18:39] **Cassidy:** Hey guys, it's Cassidy back again. So normally I'm in the background of UnBoxing God and I'm writing show notes and I'm contributing to the website. But this week McCall asked me to do this segment on toxic masculinity and femininity. I took a pause. I had a reaction and I really didn't know quite what to think of that.

[00:19:03] I have a background in public outreach education for a rape crisis center in the Dallas Fort Worth area. And so 'toxic masculinity' is a term that I'm very familiar with and have educated the public on.

Don't get me wrong. I feel like when I say toxic masculinity, there are some people who automatically jump to perhaps feminists, um, out in the street, cursing men, cursing masculinity in general, and that's not what my background is in. I would say a more appropriate explanation of my work in rape crisis was educating the public on gender biases and gender stereotypes.

[00:19:46] And because we were in rape crisis, there was more of an emphasis on toxic masculinity. The way that we rear boys in this society to be macho men, to be more aggressive, to, you know, objectify women. That contributes to the prevalence of domestic violence, sexual violence.

[20:09] So when McCall asked me to do this segment on toxic femininity I had to take a pause. When I was reading through these notes that say that toxic femininity is when women use their “female ways” to get access to certain privileges or, you know, when a woman won't let herself eat anything but a salad while on a date - stuff like that as being toxic femininity - I had a reaction and I really didn't know quite what to think of that. I understand a lot of these things, but in my head, I thought of these things as more of a reaction to toxic masculinity - the fact that I had to stay in this feminine box and wear certain things and eat certain things to keep a certain shape. So I've never actually thought of these things in terms of being toxically feminine. So when we say toxic femininity, my brain automatically jumps to “slut shaming” and, in the rape crisis world, “victim blaming”. And those terms mean that she brought this on herself, she wore the wrong thing, she said the wrong thing and she led the man on to believe that it was okay to have sex with her even though she never explicitly said so - just because of what she was wearing or what she was doing. And that, in and of itself, goes hand-in-hand with what I was taught as a girl, as a woman, growing up in Southern Oklahoma, in Southern Baptist churches, is that I had power over a man just based on what I chose to wear. So growing up I wasn't allowed to wear tank tops, things that showed cleavage, to wear short shorts, because I was told that I had power over a man and I knew exactly what I was doing as a woman and that I was telling men that it was okay to have sex with me just by wearing these things.

[00:22:09] So McCall and I had to have a phone call about it and really grapple with what these terms mean. This is us unboxing what toxic femininity could mean.

[00:22:24] **Toxic Gender Roles call between Cass & McCall**

[00:22:24] **McCall:** Let's start with 'toxic masculinity' - What would you say 'toxic masculinity' is?

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[00:22:30] **cass:** Just traditional cultural ways that we've brought men up to be "macho".

[00:22:39] **McCall:** That you're not in touch with your feelings. You're you try not to be... you push them down. Sensitivity is frowned upon and just instinctively, almost, or socio-culturally, you suppress those characteristics if you want to appear more masculine.

[00:22:54] So, toxic masculinity.... we agree on what that looks like. That's taking up more space, being less agreeable, walking into confrontation, conflict to the point of aggression, it becomes toxic, right, when it becomes aggressive. And the whole idea behind Carl Jung's concepts of the anima and animus is that as a woman, I have that masculinity within me to either tap into or two things happen - either I project it or it ruptures out of me on its own.

[00:23:34] So, 'projecting it' is... I see that in other people and react to it because I'm not harnessing it and balancing it within myself. Or, it erupts out of me. And the animus shows, according to Carl Jung, as "irrational opinions" - the anima in a man when it erupts shows as irrational moods and emotions.

[00:24:03] **cass:** Well, my animus is erupting all over the place. Let me just tell ya

[00:24:07] **McCall:** Right?

[00:24:09] So, if toxic masculinity is exaggerated expectations and narrowing of definition of characteristics that avoid those feminine traits, like passivity, empathy, sensuality, you know, "men" have to be aggressively sexual... or they're 'girly men'. You can't be coy - very few men can be considered "manly" and pull off coy.

[00:24:42] And yet... the equal opposite is true. I think as a woman, whether I was taught it with any intention from anyone or learned it with any manipulative mal-intent or not, I learned at a very Jung age that men could be manipulated because of my being a girl.

[00:25:07] Tell me what girl hasn't had a male teacher and used having their period as a way to get out of class? Or was late? Or a boss? Cramps? Hello? We play the cramp card!

[00:25:21] **cass:** Hey, it's legit, though, okay?

[00:25:23] **McCall:** It is absolutely legit - I played the 'pregnancy card'. I would cut in line to go to the bathroom. It's legit. I would have peed on the freaking floor if I hadn't done it

[00:25:31] **cass:** Right.

[00:25:32] **McCall:** But we do play the cards we have. The cards we're dealt. When we play the cards and manipulate them in some way... it's not authentic, and when it's not authentic, it very quickly turns toxic, I think.

[00:25:49] **cass:** So that's a great segue into some examples of what toxic femininity looks like.

[00:25:55] **McCall:** Gimme some...

[00:25:56] **cass:** I was reading through this list today and I really had to stop and think about if I've done any of these things. It was pretty flooring when I read through it the first time. So, women using their "female ways" to get access to certain privileges...

[00:26:13] **McCall:** I've gotten backstage at shows before, for sure. Concerts, 100%

[00:26:19] **cass:** Sure... being in the service industry, I know exactly what I need to wear to a job interview, and that normally includes a lot more makeup, and a little more perfume, and a lot more cleavage... And I have definitely gotten jobs that way.

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[00:26:35] **McCall:** I've gotten out of tickets.

[00:26:36] **cass:** Dang it. I have never gotten out of a ticket. I think I'm doing something wrong.

[00:26:46] **McCall:** Also, I think as the adult child of an alcoholic, growing up and recognizing the attention, care, compassion that I can elicit from being a victim. That martyr face becomes a mask that's hard to take off.

[00:27:07] **cass:** Yeah.

[00:27:08] **McCall:** Like, it becomes an addiction. Really. I think I've done it with illness in the past, milked an illness for that attention, especially with boys that I've dated. When I'm in a female relationship, I tend to be a little bit more masculine. I tend to be the caregiver.

[00:27:31] **cass:** Yeah, I've been the same way in female relationships. I always have to balance out the masculine energy, for some reason - in friendships and dating relationships. And I don't know why I can't be feminine around someone who is more feminine than I am - it's not okay.

[00:27:52] **McCall:** That's part and parcel to being an Alanon too, to loving people with issues, or addictions. My friend, Kay, would never be the most fucked up one in the room because she needed to take care of them. So that kept her out of the other 12-step programs... and she just marries, and loves, and takes care of, and houses, and pays bail for, others. But I relate to that.

[00:28:18] **cass:** I can relate to that too. Just being ... Just being a bartender. And this is why I've struggled being in program is that sometimes - I really relate with the alcoholics and the addicts in the room, 'cause I understand some of those feelings that they have. But on the other hand, I've been a bartender for so long, and served these guys too. And there's some part of me that has to stay just above water, so that I can take care of them, and make sure they get their next drink, and make sure I'm counting their drinks throughout the night, and make sure that they have a safe ride home, and list goes on. So, yeah, I definitely relate to that.

[00:29:00] **Cass reads “Toxic Femininity” definition**

[00:29:00] **cass:** So as a sexual assault survivor myself, I didn't even recognize that I had been sexually assaulted because, in my head, any time that I had had sex, even though I didn't want to, it was still my fault because I had worn the wrong thing, because I had said the wrong thing to lead a man on. Which is damaging, y'all. And I can't even imagine raising my kids, raising my daughters, to believe that something like sexual assault could be their fault.

[00:29:37] So I'm going to read a little bit of definition from Katie Anthony, and I'll post the link in the show notes, if anybody is interested in reading it themselves. It's from Psychology Today.

[00:29:46] “Toxic femininity,” if it exists, she wrote, “encourages silent acceptance of violence and domination in order to survive ... It's a thing women do to keep our value, which the patriarchy has told us is conditional upon our ability to bear violent domination ... Toxic masculinity also makes women feel locked into a performance of their gender bereft of the normal impulses we have toward independence, sexual agency, anger, volume, messiness, ugliness, and being a tough bird to swallow.”

[00:30:24] **Cass Take-aways**

[00:30:24] So I think one of the take-aways from this show and having these conversations and doing this research is that toxic masculinity and toxic femininity don't each exist in a vacuum by themselves. I think they go hand-in-hand and I think maybe a better, more accessible term for this would be gender stereotyping. And teaching kids, both boys

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and girls, that being the epitome of their sex, of their gender, can be damaging in the long run and lead to expectations that damage female and male relationships later on.

[00:31:12] I think another take-away from this is awareness and education. Being able to open yourself up and have these dialogues with people in your families, people in your communities, the young people that you’re around. Ya know, I don’t have kids of my own, but with my nieces and nephews, when I’m getting a birthday gift ready, am I putting it in pink and blue packaging and telling them what gender they need to be? Am I telling my nephews that they need to brush it off and stop crying? Am I telling my nieces that they need to “sit like a lady”? What am I doing in my own life that is perpetuating these gender stereotypes?

[00:31:53] **McCall:** I’m gonna read you, verbatim, part of an essay by Devon Price. Devon was born female. But now identifies as a nonbinary social psychologist.

[00:32:07] Devin wrote a piece For Medium’s publication: Human Parts. It’s called Toxic Femininity Holds All of us Back.

[00:32:17] “I am not a woman. But I have been told many times in my life that I needed to work harder to be one. My girl scout leader, Ms. Henning, was forever telling me that the curled up gargoyle-ish way that I sat in a chair was unacceptable, and unfeminine, and forced me to sit “normally”, with my legs together and my feet on the ground. I resented her every day that she corrected me, came to dread going to girl scout meetings, and never understood why my basic comfort was inherently ungirly, and also inappropriate. Years later, I had a high school sociology teacher who aimed to illustrate the perniciousness of gender roles to the class by turning to a girl, Sarah Fisher and snapping sit like a lady. We all watched as Sarah Fisher’s legs automatically slammed together and then crossed over one another in a frantic, unthinking, bid to make herself small. The teacher was smug and thought she had taught us something about how implicit gender roles could be. But most of us spent the remainder of the day focused on where our legs were and if we were sitting in a suitably feminine way.

[00:33:38] **Outro**

[00:33:38] Have you listened to enough episodes now to know that that sound you’re hearing indicates where at the end of another episode, I’d love it. If you’d go to our website and check out all the show notes and transcripts and external links and email addresses. If you look, you can even find a picture of Cassidy and me on said website, you can find it at www.unboxgodpod.com. If you’ve listened to more than a couple of episodes of this show, it would mean so much to us. If you’d go over to Apple and leave a written review,

if you don’t have an Apple, I guess that’s not a possibility. So perhaps you could share this show with a friend.

[00:39:35] Next week we’ll be back - Cassidy and myself, and probably Alison as well - to talk about sexuality and gender, as it relates to various religions and faith walks. As well as how it personally affects our own search for a power greater than ourselves. It’s going to be a juicy one. I sure hope to see you there. In the meantime, please subscribe, rate, review, share all those things that you’re supposed to say at the end of a podcast.

Do that. Make it a great week. Bye.

[00:35:36] Here’s a little ditty about anima and Animus, Two of Jung’s concepts that I think are real neat.

[00:35:46] **cass:** my animus is erupting all over the place. Lemme just tell ya