

ARCHETYPE GLOSSARY

*(a subset of the 20 archetypes referenced in the article,
Systems Thinking as a Team-Building Approach)*

Classic Archetypes

Accidental Adversaries: Someone does something that negatively affects you and/or appears to undermine you. You see the accident as sabotage, thus creating an adversarial position.

Attractiveness Principle: You say yes to more work, and/or to unreasonable deadlines. You take on extra work, because you feel you have no choice.

Escalation: You see people's actions as a threat, so you respond defensively. You continue to react in the same way, but with more effort, while expecting different results.

Growth and Underinvestment: To deal with limits, you cut investment in a key area. As growth begins to falter due to the lack of resources, you have even less incentive to add capacity, and growth slows even further.

Shifting the Burden: You have an addiction to quick fixes to relieve pressure. You know there is a long-term solution, but you are unwilling or unable to invest in it. If your fix does not work, you shift the blame somewhere else.

Success to the Successful: Someone or something is winning at the expenses of someone or something else.

Tragedy of the Commons: A common resource is being overused, creating a situation in which that resource is, or soon will be, depleted.

Positive Archetypes (© 2007 MHA Institute, Inc.)

Be Your Best: You are clear about what you are willing and able to do, and by when you are able to get it done.

Bite the Bullet: You are willing and able to invest in the time and effort required to implement the long-term solution. You take ownership for what you need to do to resolve the problem.

Cooperative Partners: You involve all parties in working together and communicating for the success of the partnership. All parties believe that everyone is coming from the best of intentions.

Fixes that Work: You determine a solution that will deal effectively with the problem, both in relieving pressure and in implementing a long-term solution.

Invest for Success: You build the capacity to meet future demands, and you are prepared to meet the possible limits that may occur as a result of investing for success.

Plan for Limits: You spend the time to continuously identify, monitor, and plan for limits that may occur and/or are occurring in the system.