

Unitarian Universalist Community Church, Augusta, ME -- Goddess/Earth Circles  
**Phases of the Goddess and Our Lives September 2021**

It started in May 2021. Rev. Carie Johnsen expressed possible interest in being included in a ceremony but expressed concern about the Tri-Goddess (Maiden, Mother, Crone) model and the position of Crone. We began exploring the concept of phases. An additional phase coming after Mother/Nurturer seemed warranted, considering the lengthening lifespans. The questions were: Where is the additional phase to be placed? By what name will it be known? How will it be described?

As we became aware of the various meanings of terms, we developed guidelines to keep the concept of phases dynamic.

- We are always changing and transforming ourselves, concepts and language.
- Phases provide broad descriptions of our life journey rather than judgment of where we are – movement through life rather than outcomes.
- We have wisdom throughout all phases as we take the experiences of each phase into the next phase.
- Phases are not exclusive. We may identify with elements from more than one phase at a time. Descriptions of phases are inclusive and continuous.
- We each define *for ourselves* where we are in the phases.

The Crone has been the time of celebration throughout the years. We describe the Crone as the changing of our focus on others to recognize and function more from our own wisdom, interests and needs. We kept the Crone as the third phase followed by the new phase, that we are presently calling Sage.

- The identification of the phases presents an image. We have selected names that reflect openness. For example, “Mother/Nurturer” is broader than being a parent. Other names have come up in the exploration, such as Queen, Enchantress, Elder, and Sage. *While we have selected names for the phases in our general description, each person is invited to name a phase for the image that it presents for them.*
- One such resource is the article “Maiden, Mother, Queen and Crone,” Sowell Magazine Spring 2000.  
<https://www.windhughes.com/articles-1/2018/4/25/maiden-mother-queen-and-crone>

The article described “stages” (that we prefer to call “phases”), in this way: “Though each stage may be symbolized by a woman of a particular age and stage of life, their essences interweaving within us, they exist as archetypes. Think of an archetype as an aspect of the human experience that continually

occurs, a pattern of behavior that becomes represented or embodied by a symbolic personality. We embody aspects of the Maiden, Mother and Crone within us always, yet we can see where one archetype may more powerfully influence a particular stage of our life.....as symbols of distinct times of our lives.”

## MAIDEN, MOTHER/NURTURER, CRONE AND SAGE

**Phase One: *The Maiden*:** (developing) This phase begins with the first menstrual cycle. The Maiden is a young woman, pure of heart, full of love and curiosity, experimenting with life, trying new things and having new experiences. She carries the seeds of potential: anything is possible and all possibilities are within her. She does not limit herself by the needs or beliefs of others. She is in love with the mystery of life. She is whole unto herself and finds complete meaning within herself.

*The dark aspects of the Maiden:* She can get lost in her own world, dangerously taking risks, holding a deaf ear to the inner voice of her own wisdom and to the wisdom of others. She may link her self-worth to pleasing others in order to receive their approval. She has not developed a strong sense of self.

*The Maiden's job:* To come to know her own thoughts, ideas, values, and purpose, and to dream and generate vision for her life. She needs encouragement to explore and believe in herself, especially when other people’s opinions of her take on more power than her own journey of self-discovery. In this stage the Maiden must find herself and her voice.

**Phase Two: *The Mother/Nurturer*:** (actualizing) The Mother/Nurturer is filled with strong nurturing energy, care, self-expression and patience. Her selfless devotion and love are unconditional. A path of some kind must be chosen and her responsibility and commitment to it established. In her choosing, lies the creative responsibility for her life, such as children and creative endeavors.

*The dark aspects of the Mother/Nurturer:* As we depend on the mother to nurture us and protect us, she has the power to abuse, abandon, control, criticize and reject. She may lose herself in the "other", and dissolve away, taking care of others while denying herself, becoming a martyr.

*The Mother/Nurture's job:* To actualize the dreams of the Maiden This is a stage where she learns to put someone or something before herself, her ego. For some, a spiritual awareness is discovered as the ego is tempered and humbled by love, service and creation.

<p><b>Phase Three: <i>The Crone</i>:</b> (acknowledging or awakening) This sacred phase commences during a woman's menopause with the chance to be introspect. This is a time for women to work through reclaiming themselves after decades of care to others. This is a powerful transition for women. We often see drastic lifestyle changes and bold steps taken to return to their true selves and recall who they really are deep down. At this passage in life the focus will shift from the exterior world of conventions to the freedom of being the ruler of your own inner realms.</p> <p><i>The dark aspects of the Crone.</i> She can become consumed with acquiring more power. Or she may respond to her sense of personal, familial or social responsibilities by withdrawing and withholding. She may feel drained, resentful and misdirect her anger. She may not feel she has anything to offer.</p> <p><i>The Crone's job:</i> To renegotiate her boundaries, realize and actualize her power and knowledge, and use her expertise for the good of all. This might be difficult for her if she lives in a patriarchal culture that devalues women and is threatened by her power.</p>	<p><b>Phase Four: <i>The Sage</i>:</b> (surrendering) The Sage has foresight, offers guidance to help another, and at the same time let other choose the path towards destiny. She has a wide perspective, gained from years of experience. This includes awareness of her own thoughts and feelings and self-understanding. She can be completely honest because she is centered in her power. She holds the wisdom, teaches and shares stories. In this phase, we recognize the life and death that is present all around the Universe.</p> <p><i>The dark aspects of the Sage:</i> She may be critical and dogmatic in views of the world, as well as of her own self. The labels attached to the insights derived while looking inward may bring a feeling of guilt and hurt. She may isolate herself and may blame others for her misfortunes. Her rage can be self-consuming, her sadness and pain deep.</p> <p><i>The Sage's job.</i> It is associated with self-reflection and understanding from asking and holding questions in order to live into the answers she seeks. Her responsibilities have moved into the arena of sharing the knowledge that she has acquired, and she welcomes the invitation to share it. She returns the seed of vision back to the Maiden. We lose so much of ourselves, within and without when we lose connection with the wisdom of the Sage.</p>
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“The Full Spirited Four-Fold Goddess: The Maiden, the Mother, The Queen and the Crone” by Mama Donna Henes, [Guest Contributor](#) on [February 24, 2013](#) ( [45](#) )

“Maiden, Mother, Queen and Crone,” Sowell Magazine Spring 2000.  
<https://www.windhughes.com/articles-1/2018/4/25/maiden-mother-queen-and-crone>

“Discovering Archetypes—The Sage Archetype  
<https://innerspacetherapy.in/sage-archetype/>

## WOMEN OF WISDOM CELEBRATION

About 2016 we started using the term Women of Wisdom, including the meaning of Croning. Our celebration has been at the beginning of phase three, following Mother/Nurturer, where Croning has been offered, as we acknowledge our own wisdom. We decided to:

Keep the celebration where it is.

Focus our celebration and use our own statement of where we are in the phases for the celebration and our statements for the Wisdom Book.

## FOUR PHASES

Four phases brings the life-span into line with other imagery that we use, such as directions and elements, and phases of the moon.

### **Honoring the Directions, Elements and Phases of the Goddess, Earth Cycle**

East, Air (Life), the Younger Woman, New Moon, Spring

The new moon is a time for new beginnings and growth, for blessing, initiating, and re-energizing creative projects. The Maiden is curious, calling forth ways to activate life direction. This is the time of *developing*.

South, Fire (Energy), the Mother/Nurturer, Full Moon, Summer

The full moon is the nurturing phase, the period of giving. The Mother/Nurturer is fulfilled through giving of herself and her gifts, and through nurturing others. This is a time of *actualizing*.

West, Water (Flow), Crone, Waning Moon, Autumn

The waning moon has given the fruits of the summer for harvest. The self-described woman moves from nurturing of others to awareness of her own wisdom, growth and interests. She supports others on their own paths while paying attention to her own. This is a time of *acknowledging*.

North, Earth (Grounding), Sage, Dark Moon, Winter

This phase of the moon is the time of mystery, of gestation, of rest. There is deep understanding of what needs to be held, what needs to be let go, and what needs to be transformed in the continuous cycle of existence. This is the time of *surrendering*.

Power of the Center.

Feel the love of the Goddess and show that love to others. May we find a place where our hearts give and receive love. It is hoped that we can bring the inner and outer truths into fusion - creating the great "wholeness" within ourselves. When wholeness occurs there is an energy from within - an illumination which touches all the corners of the self.