



# Some Thoughts on the Inner Patriarch

by Hal Stone, PhD & Sidra Stone, PhD

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When a woman is having difficulties in her life - particularly in areas having to do with her relationships, her power, her sexuality, and her ability to set and hold boundaries - ask her the following questions: "How would you act in that situation if you were a man?" or "How would you feel about that if you were a man?" The answers to these two questions lead directly to the discovery of the woman's Inner Patriarch..

Listen to the answers you get - usually given smoothly and easily -- and often with a smile:

"I wouldn't worry about the relationship. It's basically the woman's job to see that the relationship works."

"I'd go ahead and take the chance."

"I'd know I was entitled to ask for it, so I would. After all, I deserve it and I'd get it."

"I wouldn't worry about what people think."

"I'd go for the top position without a second thought."

"I'd never even think of assuming that kind of responsibility for someone's feelings."

There you have him! The Inner Patriarch is an old-fashioned kind of guy - a guy with a well developed double standard - who likes his women to be women and his men to be men. He has strong opinions about what this means, and lots of rules to make sure that the difference between them is preserved. As a matter of fact, he's one of the biggest rulemakers we've come across. And he's operating underneath - in the shadows - in just about every relationship we've seen. That's why Sidra called him the "Shadow King" on her book.

The Inner Patriarch isn't totally bad. Just like the Inner Critic who originally developed to help us to avoid shame and pain, he developed to help women live in a patriarchal society. He truly believes that they need his advice - as a man - to help them deal with the men in their lives. And he's not completely wrong.

He has rules about how a "real" man should be and how a "real" woman should be. He has rules about women and power, women and sexuality, and a surprising number and variety of rules about how men and women should behave in relationship.

If you ask any self-respecting woman whether or not she has an Inner Patriarch, she will most likely answer no. After all, the patriarchy is a clear force on the outside, a force to be consciously - and conscientiously - resisted. It is a force that a woman must no longer allow to dominate either her thinking or her life.

But the need for consciousness raising and the struggle for "women's liberation" has moved from the outer battleground to the inner. As women vigilantly look outside for the challenger, he creeps up from below. We can assure you that the patriarchy is alive and well within. Women's lives, careers, sexuality, and relationships are deeply affected by the Inner Patriarch.

As we've said, the Inner Critic works hard to enforce the rules. The Inner Patriarch gives him or her plenty of rules to enforce. The more rules you become aware of, the more choice will be available to you, and the freer, more loving, and more spontaneous your relationships will become.

So start looking for your Inner Patriarch. The signs are usually subtle, but they're there!

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In the early 1970's, Hal and Sidra had developed Voice Dialogue as a method for working with sub-personalities. Through both their personal relationship and their professional collaboration, their work evolved over the next quarter of a century into a complex methodology for working with selves and a complete theoretical system which they now call the Psychology of the Aware Ego. They are the authors of numerous books and teaching cd's which are listed on their website [www.delos-inc.com](http://www.delos-inc.com)

