An Archetype Essay

An archetype is a universal human experience. An archetype essay is an essay which focuses on one of those experiences. Of course, no one person’s experience is exactly like anyone else's, and we all have different responses to what happens to us, so our stories relating these experiences will be uniquely our own in many special ways. However, because we all have these experiences, we, as readers, relate to the archetypal stories others tell—we have been there, done that or would like to, because those experiences capture, in significant ways, what it means to be a human being.

For example: "A River Runs Through It"

I give this title to essays which discuss a special, continuing event, interest, or behavior which characterizes your family or some group you belong to. For some of us, the gospel is a river that runs through our family life and history. For others, it may be skiing. If your family spent every holiday on lake Wenatchee, if your weekends before were spent preparing the boat, if the photo album is overflowing with pictures of you skiing at age four five six and eight, etc, you could say that water sports were a river running through your family experience. Perhaps what dominated your youth was not water skiing but hiking. Let's say that weekend after weekend you took to the hills and mountains around Laie until you knew every trail between Haleiwa and Kaneohe. Let's say that your hiking buddy was your brother for four years before your missions. We could then say that hiking was a river running through your adolescent life and that your brother was part of that river.

The goal of this essay is to put your finger on the pulse of this event, force, vision, behavior, or phenomenon so you and your reader can understand why this experience is important to you.

A Journey

All of us make journeys. Some of these journeys are physical journeys. They literally take us from point A to point B—from Hong Kong to Laie, from the base of the mountain to the summit. Some journeys are spiritual. We travel from ignorance to knowledge, from prejudice to tolerance, from like to dislike and vice versa. The key to an archetype paper about a journey is "What was learned?" What is the end view after the journey? Should it have been taken? Should others take it? How should we feel about this particular journey?