

Self

Are You in Touch With Your Inner Goddess?

By Steve Weaver



Left to right: Athena, Demeter, Mary Magdalene and Persephone

For a long time now, there have been little plastic symbols of womanhood peering out through transparent plastic windows at the real girls who peer back at them longingly.

Of course these dolls can't see the girls who tug at their mother's coattails in the aisle of the toy store in hopes of coaxing them into purchasing one of these dolls for their fantasy rendezvous with Mr. Perfect at the make believe beach at the foot of their bed.

But if they did, what would they say to their giant human friend? Would they tell them they represent an almost unattainable ideal of feminine beauty? Would they tell the girls they would probably never look anything like the doll whose image may become ingrained in the girl's mind as a model for beauty?

For one Fort Wayne woman, dolls do say things to these little girls who grow up to be women. Beverley Danusis, creator of Sophia Dolls, sees the ideals portrayed by some of the dolls for young girls on the market are not healthy (and in some cases inappropriate) for these girls as they mature.

Danusis said the whole concept for her foray into the world of dolls started when she was an executive in a cosmetics company. She grew tired of some of the ideals she was presenting to women.

"I was tired of telling women, 'You're not enough,'" Danusis said. "I was tired of telling them about superficial beauty."

She also admitted to a few bad experiences. "My pain was one of my girlfriends committed suicide because she wasn't beautiful enough," she said. "That was devastating to me. My other pain was

“These dolls are anatomically correct...they’re anatomically correct for the reason of teaching little girls about body image and appropriateness and we hope to sell them to teachers and therapists too so that they’re used correctly.”

my daughter was in and out of the hospital in therapy because she was a model, but she just couldn’t cut it for them. She was just too fat and she was a size six – they needed a four.”

Danusis said she traveled all over the world performing her duties in the company and talking to women. She began to watch the women she was talking to and noticed a similar trait in the women across demographics and income levels.

“I’m noticing these women with Ph.D.s, I’m noticing these women with master’s degrees and I’m noticing these women with a high school education, or not even, who are selling our products and who have worked their way to whatever we call the top – not feeling beautiful,” she said “This disturbed me. So I began to investigate, why don’t we feel beautiful?”

She found the constant bombardment of images of perfection, the Madison Avenue Ideal of beauty, was making them feel like they were not beautiful. “It wasn’t that women looked in the mirror every morning and just thought they were ugly, but they had this image of this ideal beauty which never measured up,” Danusis said. “So they were never enough.”

After she removed herself from the cosmetics industry, Danusis started teaching workshops. “I started holding workshops on how to be a balanced woman,” Danusis said. “How are you spiritually balanced, how are you physically balanced, how are you relationship balanced, how are you balanced in all areas of your life.”

Around this time Danusis picked up a book that changed her life. “The Goddesses in Every Woman” by Jean Shinoda Bolen. “I began to study Jean’s work. I began to change all workshop material. I started teaching women there are these seven, if you will, goddess patterns or styles within every woman.”

Danusis takes special care in pointing out that these aren’t instincts. That these are archetypes present in every woman. These include being maternal, intuitive, creative and having the ability to be a good partner. She began relating her work to the mythological goddesses.

“I thought OK, this is the goddess Demeter in mythology,” Danusis said. “So I tell the story about Demeter, which is really fun in mythology, which made it interesting and fascinating. I said Demeter’s qualities were that she was a mother, she was a nurturer, she was a caretaker.”

The idea then came to her to make dolls to represent these goddesses, but make them not like the mythological body ideals some dolls currently in the marketplace represent.

“So I thought if I had a doll for each archetype, [with] different color skin, [a] different shaped face and different shaped body, women now could say, ‘I’m a goddess,’” she said. “I have seven goddesses within me and I let them each come out to play.”

The average U.S. woman, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is around 5-foot 4-inch tall and about 158

pounds. In the article “Do thin models warp girls’ body image?” on www.usatoday.com, she stated average age of a runway model is 16 to 17, an average weight of 120 to 124 pounds with most topping out at 5 feet 10 inches to 5 feet 11 inches.

She first started marketing the doll idea mainly to women, but said when she held focus groups, the women said they would like them for their little girls as well. “I realized two or three years after pulling it together that women not only wanted the dolls, but they wanted them for their little girls to play with,” Danusis said. “So then I started doing focus groups with little girls and I got very involved with what’s happening in our market today. And what I learned is that our little girls are getting their self-esteem and their self-image not only from their parents, but a lot of the women got it from their dolls they had been playing with.”

Dolls on the market today include the popular Barbie dolls, but also sassy new ones like the scantily clad Bratz with heavily made-up faces. Danusis said children are unable to separate fantasy from reality when it comes to dolls like this. “They don’t understand that a three to 12-year-old child doesn’t know the difference,” she said. “So she grows up thinking this is the way I should look. We are stealing our children’s childhood. It’s amazing what’s happening.”

To create her own dolls, Danusis learned by visiting different doll makers in the United States. But by the time she was prepared to manufacture the dolls she was completely invested in, she found all the manufacturers in the United States had closed up shop. “The company that was going to make my dolls, Middleton Dolls, shipped everything overseas,” she said. “They cancelled my order and said ‘We’re going to China.’ So then I was at square one again. I had to find a Chinese manufacturer and that’s very very dangerous if you don’t know the business.”

She found an agent who connected her to a Chinese manufacturer that didn’t provide her the doll she was looking for. Instead of the museum-quality doll she desired, she received an inexpensive Barbie-type doll. To make matters worse, the company kept the molds to her dolls, which they refused to return. Danusis was learning how to deal with companies in China the hard way and lost \$25,000 she would never recoup.

On her next attempt with Chinese manufacturers, Danusis and her husband personally searched through the country for a company she could work with. “We went into mainland China,” she recalled. “We found a couple that made dolls for Disney and for a company called Robert Toner, which is one of the finest collectible dolls in the United States. I found these people to make the dolls and I got the doll I wanted.”

Each doll uniquely represents a different goddess. “These dolls are anatomically correct,” Danusis said. “We state that on our boxes. They’re anatomically correct for the reason of teaching little girls about body image and appropriateness and we hope to sell them to teachers and therapists too so that they’re used correctly.”

As she describes it, her big break was when the QVC TV channel agreed to give her time to sell the new dolls during their Woman’s Entrepreneur Day. “I thought I would fall off my chair,” she said. “It

Self

was the biggest break I ever had because QVC usually gives you seven minutes to do your [presentation] on TV, and they said 'No we want the whole story.'" Danusis said she's scheduled for an hour on March 8, 2008.

t would one of Danusis' dolls say to a girl? Maybe it would tell the girl to be confident however they look ... and to bring out their inner goddesses.

For more information visit www.sophiadolls.com. ■



SophiaWoman Goddess Quiz

■ Hera

■ Artemis

■ Demeter

■ Hestia

■ Aphrodite

■ Persephone

■ Athena

Which goddess style are you? What is your unique goddess mix? Who is your personal goddess? Which goddess is out of balance or power?

Are you... The Independent Woman? The Leader Woman? The Counselor Woman? The Relationship Woman? The Maternal Woman? The Intuitive Woman? The Creative Woman? Answer the questions below to find out!

Directions: Read the lists below each of the seven goddesses. Shade in the boxes that most resemble you at this moment. Be certain. If an item does not apply to you or only applies once in a great while, leave the box blank. Relax. Have fun! This is not a test. It is a snapshot of your life right now.

▲ Goddess Artemis (Independent Woman)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Independent
<input type="checkbox"/> Has a clear sense of self-worth
<input type="checkbox"/> Activist for causes
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmentalist
<input type="checkbox"/> Advocate for women, children, & animals
<input type="checkbox"/> Feels equal to men
<input type="checkbox"/> Does not need men for fulfillment | <input type="checkbox"/> Strong belief in sisterhood
<input type="checkbox"/> Drawn to the moon
<input type="checkbox"/> Aggressive
<input type="checkbox"/> Overly competitive
<input type="checkbox"/> Favorite color is red
<input type="checkbox"/> "I can take care of myself!" |
|--|---|

▲ Goddess Athena (Leader Woman)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leader and high-achiever
<input type="checkbox"/> Authoritative
<input type="checkbox"/> Mature strategist and planner
<input type="checkbox"/> Cool under fire
<input type="checkbox"/> Healthy self-esteem
<input type="checkbox"/> Enjoys being single
<input type="checkbox"/> Father's daughter | <input type="checkbox"/> Favors working with men
<input type="checkbox"/> Attracted to and collects owls
<input type="checkbox"/> Values mind over emotions
<input type="checkbox"/> Workaholic
<input type="checkbox"/> Favorite color is yellow
<input type="checkbox"/> "I did it my way!" |
|---|--|

▲ Goddess Hestia (Counselor Woman)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peaceful and centered
<input type="checkbox"/> Introspective
<input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual and/or religious
<input type="checkbox"/> Dedicated to wholesome values
<input type="checkbox"/> Loves the home
<input type="checkbox"/> Family counselor
<input type="checkbox"/> Lives from the heart
<input type="checkbox"/> Fancies rituals, ceremonies, & holidays | <input type="checkbox"/> Likes candles and fireplaces
<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks boundaries
<input type="checkbox"/> Judgmental
<input type="checkbox"/> Favorite color is purple
<input type="checkbox"/> "Pretty is as pretty does." |
|--|--|

▲ Goddess Hera (Relationship Woman)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loyal and commitment-oriented
<input type="checkbox"/> Regal and ladylike
<input type="checkbox"/> Prosperous mind-set
<input type="checkbox"/> Decision-maker
<input type="checkbox"/> Superb communicator
<input type="checkbox"/> Needs to be appreciated
<input type="checkbox"/> Must be married or in a relationship | <input type="checkbox"/> Puts relationship before work
<input type="checkbox"/> Enjoys rings and wears several at a time
<input type="checkbox"/> Revengeful
<input type="checkbox"/> Inability to leave destructive relationships
<input type="checkbox"/> Favorite color is blue
<input type="checkbox"/> "You are the love of my life." |
|---|---|

▲ Goddess Demeter (Maternal Woman)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Motherhood #1, work #2
<input type="checkbox"/> Loving and soft-hearted
<input type="checkbox"/> Generous and giving
<input type="checkbox"/> People-pleaser, delights in serving others
<input type="checkbox"/> Forgiving and understanding
<input type="checkbox"/> Resolute and determined | <input type="checkbox"/> Finds pleasure in gardens
<input type="checkbox"/> Sacrifices self for others
<input type="checkbox"/> Martyr
<input type="checkbox"/> Favorite color is green
<input type="checkbox"/> "Are you hungry?" |
|--|--|

▲ Goddess Persephone (Intuitive Woman)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intuitive
<input type="checkbox"/> Imaginative
<input type="checkbox"/> Open and receptive
<input type="checkbox"/> Balances work and home
<input type="checkbox"/> Innocent and child-like
<input type="checkbox"/> Interprets dreams
<input type="checkbox"/> Mother's daughter | <input type="checkbox"/> Committed to self-discovery
<input type="checkbox"/> Fascinated with mystery stories
<input type="checkbox"/> Randomly depressed
<input type="checkbox"/> Manipulative
<input type="checkbox"/> Favorite color is indigo
<input type="checkbox"/> "I told you so!" |
|--|--|

▲ Goddess Aphrodite (Creative Woman)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creative
<input type="checkbox"/> Romantic and passionate
<input type="checkbox"/> Unconventional and uninhibited
<input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiastic and fun-loving
<input type="checkbox"/> Appreciates the Arts
<input type="checkbox"/> Inspiring
<input type="checkbox"/> Needs variety in work | <input type="checkbox"/> Lives life in the moment
<input type="checkbox"/> Loves romantic movies
<input type="checkbox"/> Often prostitutes own dreams
<input type="checkbox"/> Craves multiple relationships
<input type="checkbox"/> Favorite color is orange
<input type="checkbox"/> "I'm so sexy!" |
|---|--|

Now, count the shaded boxes for each goddess and total them. Which goddess has the most? This is your leading goddess. Pay close attention to the goddesses with the least amount of shaded boxes, as well as the negative aspects of each goddess, or you may find yourself out of power. Your aim is to bring them back into balance by developing their complement. Review your SophiaWoman goddess profile often to make sure that you are spending time with each goddess.

Each woman has her own unique goddess profile. It is not important to obtain an equal amount of characteristics for each goddess, but rather to learn about *your* individual blend of goddess traits. You are learning about your own composite of goddesses and to get a thumbnail sketch of whom and what you are about and how you can become more balanced.

For more detailed information about SophiaDoll's™ and the SophiaWoman Goddess Quiz please go to our website: www.sophiadolls.com.

Copyright 1985. Revised 2007. Nea Matia, Inc. Created by Beverley Ann Danusis, CCO, and Dr. Don Parker.

Copyright 1985. Revised 2007. Nea Matia, Inc. Created by Beverley Ann Danusis, CCO, and Dr. Don Parker.

Happy Holidays

from



NORTHSIDE GALLERIES

www.northsidegalleries.com

charley@northsidegalleries.com • 260-483-6624

335 E. State Blvd. • Ft. Wayne, IN 46805

Framed memories
make great gifts!

Let us make it special!

- Fine Art, Prints and Posters
- Custom Picture Framing & Matting
- Preservation of Personal Memorabilia
- Reframing/Rematting of Existing Artwork
- Mirrors/Mirror Framing
- Object Framing
- Extensive Selection of Art/Frames/Mat Styles
- Consultation/Installation Available
- Competitive Pricing