

The Conscious
Living Program

MODULE 3: PROJECTION & SHADOW

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Quotes

Read the quotes below and reflect on what resonates for you or where it seems familiar. Capture your thoughts, ideas and associations in your journal.

“Just as we tend to assume that the world is as we see it, we naïvely suppose that people are as we imagine them to be. . . . All the contents of our unconscious are constantly being projected into our surroundings, and it is only by recognizing certain properties of the objects as projections or imagoes that we are able to distinguish them from the real properties of the objects. . . . Cum grano salis, we always see our own unavowed mistakes in our opponent. Excellent examples of this are to be found in all personal quarrels. Unless we are possessed of an unusual degree of self-awareness we shall never see through our projections but must always succumb to them, because the mind in its natural state presupposes the existence of such projections. It is the natural and given thing for unconscious

contents to be projected.” [General Aspects of Dream Psychology," *ibid.*, par. 507.]

“...this integration [of the shadow] cannot take place and be put to a useful purpose unless one can admit the tendencies bound up with the shadow and allow them some measure of realization – tempered, of course, with the necessary criticism. This leads to disobedience and self disgust, but also to self-reliance, without which individuation is unthinkable.” (A Psychological Approach to the Dogma of the Trinity, Carl Jung)

Quotes



“This confrontation is the first test of courage on the inner way, a test sufficient to frighten off most people, for the meeting with ourselves belongs to the more unpleasant things that can be avoided so long as we can project everything negative into the environment. But if we are able to see our own shadow and can bear knowing about it, then a small part of the problem has already been solved: we have at least brought up the personal unconscious. The shadow is a living part of the personality and therefore wants to live with it in some form. It cannot be argued out of existence or rationalized into harmlessness. This problem is exceedingly difficult, because it not only challenges the whole man, but reminds him at the same time of his helplessness and ineffectuality.” (Carl Jung)

“The shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort. To become conscious of it involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real.” [The Shadow," CW 9ii, par. 14.]

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Concept

Last week we explored complexes. This week we will look at the process of personification and complex projections and unconscious beliefs that we project onto others. Complexes can be conscious e.g. a talent, semi-conscious e.g. an aversion to something, or unconscious which means you are completely unaware of it. Jung said a complex becomes pathological only when you are not aware of it. But how do you become aware of your unconscious complexes? This is done through working with projection.

Projection

Projection is a psychological function that is done automatically by our psyches. We

cannot relate to anything unless there is a measure of projection involved. The reason we fall in love, take a liking to people and befriend them, are inspired by our careers and hobbies and find meaning in life are all driven by projection.

Projection is a process that allows us to take what lives within our psyches and place it outside onto another object. We project onto people, companies, careers, concepts, goals, desires, fears, our possessions and ourselves.

Complexes project, so all of our projections are a result of a complex that lives within us. To use an example of a creative complex. If you

have an artistic complex, this complex can be conscious, so you will be expressing yourself creatively through some medium. A semi-conscious creative complex would be expressed in some sort of appreciation of art. An unconscious creative complex can express itself through projections onto artists, e.g. they are lazy, do not make money, etc. If you were a highly creative child born into a family of chartered accountants, that complex would have been suppressed and rejected, so that child may grow up rejecting creativity and projecting that rejection onto others.

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The Process of Projection

Projections come about by placing internal values and feelings onto the external world. As mentioned earlier we project onto everything, but in terms of shadow work we are interested in the projections of unconscious complexes. There are a few ways to identify when you are projecting shadow content. The first identifier is that there will be a physical or emotional reaction. You may get highly irritated, emotional, tears, anger, joy, excitement etc. Or you may develop an instant headache, your heart will pound, sweats, stomach aches etc. The second identifier is that you “know” you are right or

that you “know” something about the other. Complexes are highly one sided so the inability to see the other side or opposite perspective indicates that your complex has possessed you and you are projecting. The final identifier of projection is that you carry the issue with you for a long time. There is a well-known parable about two monks who needed to cross a river. At the edge of the river they come across a woman and one monk offers to carry her across. Afterwards he puts her down on the other side of the river and they walk along for a few hours. Eventually the other monk turns to the monk who carried the woman and confronts him.

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Why did you carry that woman? You know we are not allowed to touch women!” whereby the first monk responds, “I put her down long ago and you are still carrying her”.

Hooks

Projected content lands on specific individuals, because they hook that projection. Something within that person resonates with the projection. What is important to realize is that the projected content is not necessarily that which you project. You may project onto someone that they are a thief, which doesn't mean you are a thief, but rather that there is some aspect in

you that is perhaps dishonest or grasping. It is also important to take note that if you have been wounded, the projection may consist of the fear and anger based in your wound, and not that you are like that person, e.g. if you were abandoned as a child, you may project onto people who abandon their families. This does not mean you will abandon your family, but that you carry the wound of being abandoned.

How a Projection Is Experienced

When you are triggered through a projection, you will have an emotional or physical response. You will also have a psychological

reaction consisting of thoughts, memories, feelings all clustering together around the complex. We have all had the experience of arguing with a partner and then feeling wronged. All the past hurts and similar arguments flood the psyche, and you are fixed in a dynamic that carries a lot of psychic energy. The complex can possess you for an hour or sometimes much longer. All the while you will stay in the same feeling state. That is why Jung described complexes as clusters of feeling toned memories.

Why Work with Projections?

As complexes have a powerful impact on our

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Concept

lives because of their unconscious drives and intentions, shadow work is essential to free yourself from this unconscious influence. Jung said that until we make the unconscious conscious, it will direct our lives and we will call it fate. The only way to change your relationship and influence of these complexes onto your life is to make them conscious. Working with your projections will allow you to access these complexes and their unconscious beliefs and influence so that you are able to shift these dynamics.

Final Points

Neurosis is the experience of being stuck, repeating patterns over and over again. These

neurotic complexes are very good at hiding. They do not want to be seen. Shadow work is a process that will carry on for the rest of your life. Complexes are rooted in the archetype, so each complex is multi layered and on your path of individuation, they come around again and again and each time working with the complex through projection will allow you to access more of the dynamic. Through working with the shadow complexes the effect of the complex is diminished, and it can be integrated into the conscious ego personality.

It is also important to note that shadow work is not only working with negative and destructive complexes but also the positive

and constructive ones that live within the unconscious.



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Applications

Picking up on the complexes we identified last week, we will explore the projections of these complexes during this week.

Reflect on what projections these complexes carry.

For each complex, identify synonyms and antonyms of the complex's main theme. For example, if the complex is "arrogant", what are the synonyms and antonyms for arrogant? Use a thesaurus or google to identify these words. Remember that a complex is bivalent in nature, that is why we are exploring the opposites as well. Write down as many as you can find.

The next step is to choose emotive words from the list and write down your association and beliefs of this word. For example, lets say one of the words for arrogant that is emotive for you, is "opinionated".

Example:

My associations and beliefs would look like this.

"I can't stand opinionated people, especially when they clearly don't know what they are talking about. I think they use it to pretend intelligence when they are clearly not. It is a sign of an inferiority complex."

As you can see from my example, your projections become clear. The more you can write, the clearer your projections will become. Choose all the words that you find trigger you. Do the same for the antonyms, e.g. humble in relation to our example.

We will explore both the negative complex and the positive complex.

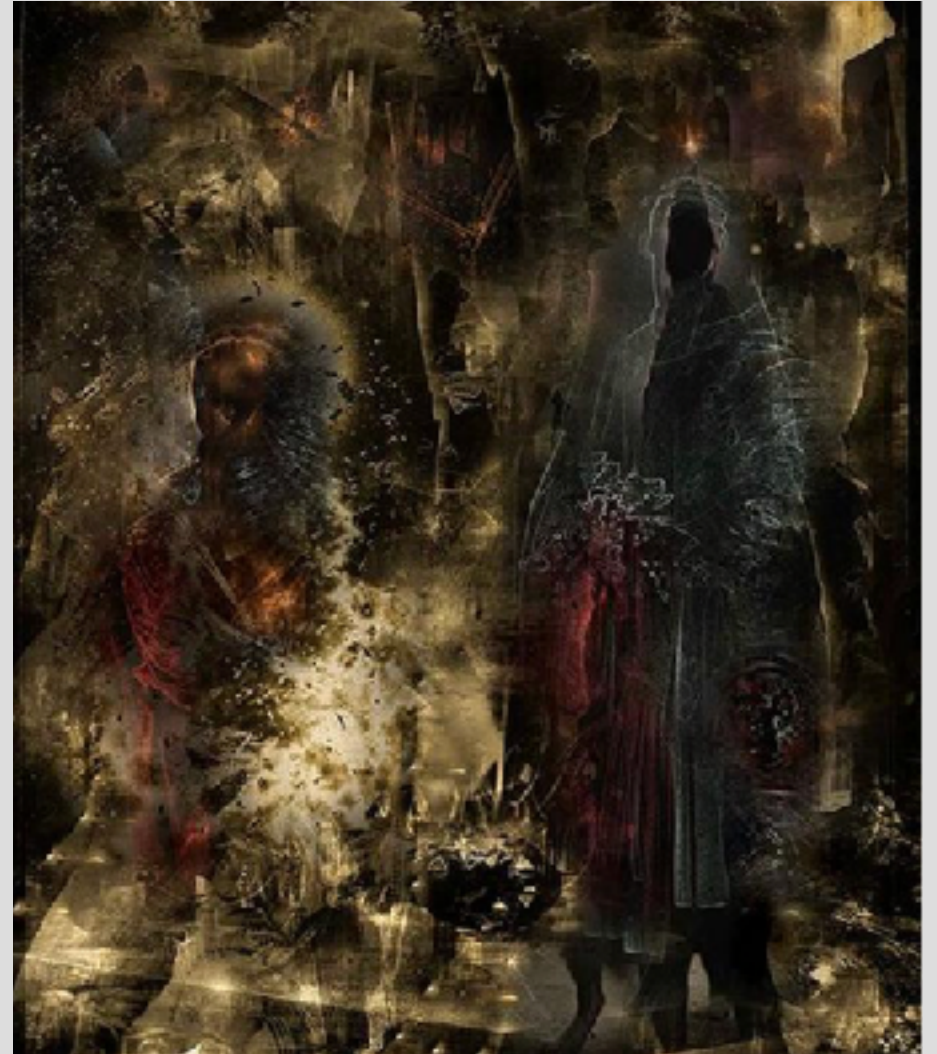
Use this workbook to explore two words for the complex and two for the antonyms. Please explore your other words in your journal.

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Applications

What Are You Projecting?

The final part of the application explores who, in your life, you are projecting onto. Look at all the words identified in your application (antonyms and synonyms) and reflect on who or what in your life you project these beliefs onto. It can be your intimate partner, your family members, your colleagues or friends, companies, brands, food, politicians, etc. Also try to identify behaviour that triggers this complex, e.g. when you are being dismissed or ignored or bullied. Be creative in your approach to these applications and play with ideas, since these complexes are unconscious and like to hide. Identifying triggers helps tremendously with understanding the complex in order to dialogue with it and make it conscious.



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Mindfulness Activity

Become aware of projections by following your emotive and physical reactions. Capture the descriptive words for the individual or any object that you project onto. Then explore this word as per our application, identifying unconscious beliefs.



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Links to Resources

SUGGESTED READING:

[Projection and re-collection in Jungian Psychology](#)
by Marie-Louise von Franz

[Inner Gold: Understanding psychological projection](#) by Robert A. Johnson

[Psychology of the unconscious](#) by C.G. Jung

YOUTUBE VIDEOS:

<https://youtu.be/gL9isdHw9CQ> (James Hollis)

<https://youtu.be/58NSHmSBPTc> https://youtu.be/oTK_P_waNb4

ARTICLES:

<https://frithluton.com/articles/projection/>

<https://academyofideas.com/2018/02/carl-jung-shadow-dangers-of-psychological-projection/>

<http://jungutah.com/projection-you-are-my-mirror-and-i-am-yours/> <https://blackdoorfoundation.com/projection-a-key-to-self-knowledge/>

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