

Juliette Lee

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Projection

Projection is a psychological defense mechanism whereby we *unconsciously* deny our own undesirable traits and feelings, either positive or negative, and “project” them onto someone else, rather than admitting to or dealing with them. The more upsetting we find the feeling, the greater the impulse to project it onto another person. It’s like putting a mask on another person’s face and then reacting to the mask. That person may either fascinate or repel us. We effectively trick ourselves into believing that these undesirable qualities actually belong elsewhere – anywhere but as a part of us.

When we “project” we give away an energy or power that rightfully belongs to our psyche and in doing so we are diminished. The more we project, the less energy we have.

For example, we might imagine “She hates me,” when we actually hate her. We might think someone else is angry or judgmental, yet are unaware that we are angry or judgmental, or greedy, or lazy and so on.

Every part of our personality that we do not accept will become hostile to us.

Using the Jekyll and Hyde analogy, if we refuse to look at certain aspects of ourselves, they eventually creep up and take over.

So, the first task of individuation or becoming conscious, is to safely pull back our projections and become aware of our shadow. Once we have done that, we then need to integrate the inner opposite gender aspect of ourselves, anima in a man and animus in a woman. More on that later.

This is complex work so please bear in mind that the goal of all personal development is to become whole not perfect.

- **Deny** – What I do not admit in myself, I attribute to others.
- **Devalue** – What I devalue in myself, I criticise and underestimate in others.
- **Fear** – What I fear in myself, I flee from or fight in others.
- **Dependency** – What I do not find in myself, I depend on others for.



He who cannot forgive another,
breaks the bridge over which
he himself must pass.

George Herbert