Projection and Shadow

Does the situation inform or inflame?

The Opportunity

The more someone inflames me, angers or upsets me, the more I know I have something to learn about myself from that person. In particular, I need to see where projection from my shadow side has interfered with my willingness to resolve.

Projection

Projection is when we see our own thoughts and feelings in the minds and behavior of others and not in ourselves. We push something about ourselves out of our awareness and instead see it coming towards us from others. We see that X is angry with us and we feel hurt. We don't recognize that we are angry with X and would like to hurt X. It's very similar to film projection. The movie going on in our heads is projected out onto the people around us. Each of us builds, in this way, a highly personalized world. Greater self-awareness is necessary if we are to see reality.

Persona and Shadow

Psychologist, Carl Jung, used the word "Persona" to describe the conscious aspects of personality, good and bad aspects that are known to the person. Jung called the unknown side of which we are "shadow".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persona: My self-image. Things I accept are true about myself. My conscious desires, wants, feelings, intentions and beliefs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shadow: Potential I have not unfolded. Aspects of myself I'm not ready to know about. My unconscious wants and dislikes. Emotional responses that is too painful to fully experience. Abilities/talents I'm not ready to accept or express.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WILLINGNESS TO RESOLVE

Shadow Hugging and Boxing

Extreme attachment or rejections are both signs that our shadow has us in its hold. If we are overly attached to someone because of desirable qualities that we see in him/her and deny in ourselves we are SHADOW HUGGING. If we are overly rejecting of undesirable qualities in someone or something that we deny in ourselves we are SHADOW BOXING.

The hook

The behavior in the other person that is inflaming me, in itself a neutral event. My projection gets caught on this hook.

The symptom

My emotional reaction (usually variations on anger or hurt).

The projection

The part of my shadow that is causing my strong reaction.

Acknowledgement

To be willing to resolve, we need to acknowledge our projection.

Consider:

- **Suppressed needs** e.g. failing to recognize my need for companionship, I am deeply hurt when a friend postpones time we'd planned to be together.
- **Unresolved personal history** e.g. If I was seriously let down as a child I may become really wild when people don't do what they promised.
- **Unacceptable qualities** e.g. because I don't accept my own anger, I don't accept it in others.