

8 WHAT IS PROJECTION?

To answer his question about projection, more information on how the mind sets up what it sees was necessary. Once its reality is structured, the mind tends to see only in terms of its own contents and pre-programmed filters. It tends to place the meanings it contains on anything similar to its past. To a hammer the whole world looks like a nail.

"What is this, Richard?"

[Book contains graphic of house.]

"A house, of course."

"The Truth is, it is just lines on paper. A man from the jungle who had lived in nothing but caves, would not look at those lines and say, 'Oh, that house has smoke coming out of the chimney.' He does not have that meaning, that reality stored in his mind. He has no brain cells that contain that information. For him there is no house in the lines on the page. 'House' is a reality contained in and projected outward from the mind of the observer and only an observer with a house in their past would call the lines on the page a house."

"You mean there is nothing out there? It's all in my mind?" Richard seemed baffled.

"No, the lines on the page are there, the external world exists. The point I'm making is that until we become aware, the objective world is just a framework upon which we project or hang what we have filed away in our minds.

"Imagine a child whose home life was miserable, a life of severe abuse. If he sees these lines on the page, what might happen? His blood pressure might rise, his eyes will probably bulge slightly, and he might be preparing to run. He has given the lines a meaning from his past —a meaning contained in his mind.

"Another child who loved lying on the couch in front of the fireplace while mom or dad rubbed her back sees the lines on our page. Images of wonderful food and family events might be triggered as she projects the meaning her mind contains upon the identical framework. Her mind does not generate a reason to run."

Richard was beginning to grasp the subtle concept that a reality seen through a mind is internal to the perceiving mind. He fed back to me his understanding that as you look at the lines on the paper, your mind instantly gives a meaning to them; the lines themselves have no meaning other than what your mind projects. I completed this aspect of the discussion with the idea, once again, that projection results from the belief that someone else is responsible for the output of your mind. When that belief is held, the mind uses whatever internal information is triggered by another for building a reality about that person. Our denied and suppressed attribute shows up as part of the image our mind

builds of them. The mind successfully documents that our pain belongs to them—they are the cause of what we feel.

"The mind is actually a prism through which we view life. If there is any distortion—any kind of resentment or negative feeling—that resentment or negative feeling clouds perception and colors our view of the world. This is why the First Law of Seeing is Love. A mind that constantly holds the condition of Love, regardless of circumstance, distorts nothing and is incapable of projection.

"When there is a distortion within the mind, we live within its meaning. If anyone who remotely resembles a person we hold a grievance against comes into awareness through our senses, we will instantly project our reality onto them. We tend to believe that it is they who are the source of our grievance and pain, rather than accepting responsibility for the content of our own minds. This blocks the ability to heal what someone triggers in us and leads to experiencing the same realities repeatedly. Only when we take responsibility can we change the foundations of our perception.

"Denial keeps the source of our pain hidden. We, as human beings, are usually taught to interact in relationships in a way that guarantees a cycle of repeated experiences. The first step in keeping that cycle going is to deny any involvement in causing our own pain. Then blame another and instruct that person in how he or she should change. If they refuse, we are taught to punish them to force change. If punishment doesn't work, we often leave or throw them out of our lives. This formula is guaranteed. If you use it, you can rest assured that someone who knows exactly how to access and show you the hidden parts of your mind will soon be knocking on your door . . . AGAIN!

"It is interesting to note that we project in order to avoid pain and by doing so lock inside ourselves the very thing we are attempting to avoid. This is a good definition of insanity."

KEY THOUGHT—Projection results from the belief that someone else is responsible for my thoughts, my feelings, my reality—and the output of my mind.

Richard slowly fed back to me, "If I understand correctly, by blaming you, I expect you to be responsible for my reality even though it all comes from inside my own mind. If I try to control you through punishment, I'm kidding myself into believing that by changing you I will never be forced to experience my pain again. Is that what you are saying?"

"Yes. Changing someone else will not—cannot change your reality. Only you can initiate and carry out that process, only you can change what is in your mind. It also takes a lot of energy to keep the lie of projection in place and prevent the Truth from entering your awareness."

"Put that way, michael, I can see the conflict is in my own thinking. I am trying to achieve an unreachable goal and I get so frustrated I exhaust myself. That is so obvious now and I see what has been zapping my energy!" he reflected. "A friend who is a

medical doctor recently told me the most common complaint he hears is about lack of energy. He called it chronic fatigue. I'm starting to understand the source of my tiredness. It's like I've been carrying a one ton weight on my shoulders!"

Richard's tendency to run from conflict provided an example for us to examine the dynamics of projection in his life. I explained: "In a relationship based on projection, each believes the other is responsible for his or her projections and carries their hidden, unhealed upsets as a burden. As a result, each mind has a distorted picture of what is actually happening. This distortion results from Blockage of Truth. The mind projects its own errors onto others and cannot see the Truth about itself.

"The mind has unconsciously used its hidden information to build its image of 'them'. We then pretend that our mind's image is a true and accurate picture of the outside world, when it is only a true and accurate picture of what is happening inside of us. It is just a projection of a condition in our own minds.

"When projection occurs, each person expects others to be responsible for his or her thoughts and realities. Each, in effect, wants the other to change his or her mind. As a result, each mind distorts its picture of actuality. The distortion results from Blockage of Truth, which is inherent in the act of projecting. The blocked mind experiences powerlessness because it is cut off from Truth, not because another person has the power. We have done ourselves a major disservice when we project, for we have cut ourselves off from the part of our belief system that needs healing."

Richard almost exploded with excitement as he expressed his thoughts. "You mean it's all an inside job?!" he tendered. "As long as I project—pretend that you are responsible for my reality—I block the Truth? Being out of touch with the Truth is at the root of my feelings of powerlessness? Once I grasp that it is my holding on that keeps me re-experiencing the same painful scenarios, I can get out of the cycle by using the tools?"

"This is actually starting to make sense! I'm surprised, I feel hopeful—like there is something I can do!" he continued, his voice sounding a little lighter. "I've always been terrified around women and never did understand how I could feel that helpless in front of someone who was eight inches shorter and 60 pounds lighter than I am.

"Now, I see that whenever I hold a reality based on the belief that I am powerless, anyone who triggers that reality in me can make me believe I am powerless—is that right?"

Richard was pretty close in his understanding. No one can actually make another feel anything. However, others can trigger the internal mechanism, and whatever is there will surface. "Richard, if you have a reality called 'powerlessness' and someone stimulates that belief about yourself, you will experience the effects of that belief as feelings of powerlessness. Keep in mind that you feel something because that reality is within you. No one can make you experience a reality that you haven't already created within yourself.

KEY THOUGHT—We tend to dislike and resist in others what we suppress in ourselves.

"If you mistake 'them' as the cause of your reality, of your upset and of your feelings , you will seem to be a 'victim' of them and tend to dislike or hate them. If you know how feelings are formulated within yourself and take corrective action, each painful situation will simply be your opportunity to heal."

"Why should I forgive them?" Richard quipped.

"I didn't suggest forgiving them, Richard, I suggested forgiving the realities in your mind. True Forgiveness does not mean letting someone else off the hook; you can't forgive anyone for anything. True Forgiveness is a tool for changing realities in your own mind, but I'd like to take up that topic in more detail later."