

Taking Back Projections

In Session 1 of *Supercoach*, Michael Neill underscores the process by which we create our perception of the world. He likens the “reality” we see to a movie we project onto the screen of our experience.

When motion pictures first came out, a group of cowboys gathered in a bunkhouse to watch their first movie projected onto a sheet hanging on a wall. When the movie came to a scene in which a band of Indians in war paint stormed up over a rise with a thunder of war cries, one cowboy stood, pulled out his pistol, and fired six shots at the images of Indians. The movie stopped, the lights went on, and his compadres howled as they observed six bullet holes in nothing but a sheet.

When we fight anyone or anything in the outer world, we are like the cowboy shooting at illusions. We are fighting a belief in our mind more than an element of reality. The world goes on as it is only because people have succumbed to the illusion of separation, believing that the people and things they see are separate from their thoughts about them.

By the same principle, when we designate someone in the outer world as our savior religiously, financially, or romantically, we are engaging with a projection more than a reality. In this case we are projecting our belief in good rather than our belief in evil. Nonetheless, the projection of saviorship is equally as illusory as the projection of enemy, and if we are to advance spiritually we must take back that projection as well.

When you coach a client, you become aware of the projections she has cast onto the screen of her experience. Such projections are most obvious in romantic relationships. When we become intimate with someone, we are especially prone to project our loving fantasies onto them as well as our fearful or angry images. This is why romances fail. We write a script for our partner based on our fantastic expectations, we project that role for them, and then when they don't play that role, we feel disappointed or betrayed.

To be more precise, when our partner disappoints us, he is actually playing out perfectly the script we have written for him. He is an actor in our movie. We do not see people as they are. We see our *version* of who they are.

You can help your client immensely by helping him identify his projections about the people in his life, for better or worse, and then guiding him to take back his projections, or claim responsibility for the movie he has produced. Few people are aware of this dynamic, so if you help your client to understand he is the originator of his experience and not the victim, you will help your client make huge strides. (ACIM Lesson 31: *“I am not a victim of the world I see.”*)

Your client’s husband, wife, parents, children, boss, family, friends, government, religion, and so on are all stories the client made up. This is not to say that the people “outside” your client are not real or they are not doing the actions your client reports. It *is* to say that how your client perceives those people and institutions are the result of your client’s projections about them. Other people likely see those same people and institutions in entirely different ways. (James Allen: *“We think in secret and it comes to pass. Environment is our looking glass.”*)

Asking a client to question or undo her projections inevitably calls forth resistance, so you must be gentle and diplomatic with your suggestion. First let your client explain or spew about her upset. When she has had a chance to do so and you have demonstrated effective listening, validation, and empathy, invite your client to get in touch with the pain and suffering this projection has engendered. When the client acknowledges that this experience is no fun, ask her if she would be willing to revisit her assumption about what this other person has done or who they are. “Would you be open to question the story you are telling yourself? If it is hurting you so much to hold on to it, would you be willing to look at it from another angle that brings you more peace and relief?”

If your client expresses the slightest willingness to look at his situation from another angle, you have an entrée to healing. At this point you and your client can explore other vantage points, alternative stories that work better. If your client continues to be willing, you can help her reframe her way out of pain and into freedom and success.

You can also undo projections of power or love by demonstrating to your client that she has given her power away to her husband, parent, child, boss, or spiritual teacher. The current painful scenario is her opportunity to once and for all take her power back and stand on equal ground with this person who *appears* to be more powerful, but who is actually the screen onto which your client has projected her disowned power.

The process of taking back projections is illuminating and empowering, and can be lots of fun. Begin by taking back the projections in your own life. Then you will be in the best possible position to assist your clients to do the same.

Exercise:

1. Consider a relationship with someone with whom you are having difficulty. What story are you telling yourself about this person and relationship?
2. Would you be willing to tell yourself a different story, one that brings you greater relief, release, and empowerment? If so, what is the better story?
3. Consider a client who is having difficulty in a relationship of any kind. What is the story the client is telling him- or herself that is dragging him or her down?
4. What alternative story might the client tell him- or herself that would lead to great peace, relief, or empowerment?
5. Can you see how all the troubles of the world are a result of projection, and how they could be resolved by each of us taking back our projections and substituting ones that work better?

Affirm:

I accept responsibility for the projections that create my experience.

**I now create a new and better experience by authoring new stories
that work in my favor and in favor of those I contact.**