

[Gangaji Radio](#)

A Conversation With Gangaji Series
Host Hillary Larson
Episode 30
OTHER PEOPLES' PROJECTIONS
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[00:03] INTRODUCTION MUSIC

[00:08] HILLARY LARSON, HOST: It's irritating at the very least; someone assumes what you're thinking or feeling. Perhaps you have someone in your life right now who is just certain they know what's true for you. In an extreme way, perhaps it's even an abusive relationship. Do we ignore their projections? Do we not take them personally? Do we stay or do we go?

(clip)

[00:30] GANGAJI: We are free to stay in relationships that are unpleasant to discover what we need to discover, if there's anything, and we're free to leave them - immediately!

(end clip)

[00:40] HILLARY: If projections are ultimately generated by the mind, then how do we know what's real? What if what we think about each other, and ourselves, is just based on past experiences and brain chemistry? What if these projections ultimately have no basis in reality - what then? Where do we find solid ground? I'm Hillary Larson, and this is *A Conversation With Gangaji*.

[01:14] HILLARY: I just want to say for people that are tuning into this show, for all of you who are tuning into this show and you missed the last show which was called, What I Think About you and What That Means About Me- that was all about projection and this is part two of that conversation. Part one, kind of laid the groundwork for this conversation and it was about how we project onto other people our thoughts or what we believe is happening, and there was a clip in there, a ten-minute clip, that I felt like you just so completely laid out how a projection works. How we assume something about what somebody's thinking and then you just walked this lovely woman through all of the layers of that. So I wanted to bring that up because if you haven't heard that episode, it's just so worth listening to. And so today I really wanted to talk about what it means when people project onto *us*. And having said that, I also want to say that there were several letters from people that either had comments about the last show or they wanted clarification on something. Sylvia from Australia, she just wanted to give you an example of how that works with her relationship with her husband. I thought this was so sweet, I could totally relate to this. She says, "I'll assume my husband has seen a situation a certain way, and is therefore acting a certain way, which usually triggers anger or some feeling that I am believing within me. When I ask him about this scenario - this is the scenario she thinks is true - he usually looks confused, like he has no idea how I've come to that conclusion." And I wanted to read that because I just thought that is such a beautiful example of what happens in relationships with projection.

[03:06] GANGAJI: Hmm, yes. I mean, we think our communication is sophisticated, but it's really quite primal and that's just such a clear reflection of it.

[03:17] HILLARY: Yeah, I was thinking with that, that it's almost like the communication we have with each other is...part of it is actually invisible - it's non-auditory (laughter) because we're having these conversations in our heads.

[03:31] GANGAJI: Yes, assumptions. Assumptions get built up. Just as Sylvia says, she knew how her husband saw something and his response was therefore around that and it was a total illusion. That's the illusion that we want to wake up from. People have this idea of waking up from the illusion - a chair's a chair or the sky's the sky, but it's really this illusion of what we think we know.

[04:00] HILLARY: Wow that is so true, and it happens, as we were talking last time, it just happens so quickly, that trance sets in so quickly, that I think it's rare for a person to really stop and question the thought.

[04:17] GANGAJI: Yes, yes it is rare. It's been rare to awaken, but your life, whoever you are, listening, it can prove that to be no longer true, that it's actually available for ordinary people. To see through the illusion, at least. To recognize the illusion - the mechanics of the illusion, and wake up.

[04:42] HILLARY: Well, it's a humbling topic I'd have to say for myself because I actually had the most beautiful projection going earlier today, 'cause I had sent an email to you about an idea I had and then I assumed that you maybe just didn't think it was that great of an idea. (laughter) So, anyway it was so real in my head, and you know, I found out that that wasn't true. But it was like - wow - I got caught in that little thing again.

[05:14] GANGAJI: Mmm. Well, that's the loop and I think it's really important to always speak about the way our brains work, in just lay person's language, in that, our brains, human brains, are different from say bat brains or grasshopper brains or the function of knowledge that a bacteria has or a virus has. That we design, our brains are designed, to make sense of reality and the purpose of making sense of reality is to survive. So, just like a bat or a grasshopper or bacteria or virus all have the same purpose, to survive, to replicate, to keep going, so we have that. And so we personally and collectively make sense of what we are receiving, sounds and sights, emotions that go with those sounds and sights, and the way we make sense is then we think about them and we create a reality. And so, when we are speaking of illusion, first of all it's the recognition that we have created this reality. Often spiritual groups are speaking about 'create your reality', create a better reality, but what was so beautiful to me about Papaji's invitation was, *first* recognize that you are already creating a reality, and *then* you have the capacity to stop, just for a moment to stop your creation of reality, rather than going on to the next better creation. Just pull back, retreat, stop. And then the illusion, the way our brains work, which *is* illusion, makes form out of just phenomena. That illusion doesn't have the same power, and while it may continue to operate, because our brains operate the way they do, it doesn't have the weight. So, I don't know what changed it for you when you relay that story of assuming something when an email wasn't answered. Maybe somebody gave you other information or maybe you just let it go, it's like "Oh, I don't know that. How could I know that?" Then you can ask if it's something that you want to know, or even before you ask, you can reveal, we can *all* reveal, in this truth of not knowing and recognize what is it that is here that we don't *need* to know? That's *already* here? And then our projections are just, they're illusions, and sometimes they're positive and

sometimes they're negative, but we don't need to defend them. It's just, we are in relationship with ourselves. Whether it's as another or whether it's our own identity or projection of ourselves as this one form that we think we are. So, I don't want to go on without you talking any, (laughter) but I did want to just lay the ground with that.

[08:38] HILLARY: Well, I think what I have said many times over is what I love about these conversations is they're about real life...you know? What happens when you wake up in the morning and you have an encounter with somebody or you've got anxiety, or you've got a money issue and this to me is kind of like the most, maybe the most over-looked, but one of the most concrete ways that we as human beings operate and I think it causes the most trouble. And so, I am kind of on a little personal mission. I really wanted to get in as many questions from all of you as I possibly can, so, along those lines of just dealing with each other as human beings, Lisa from Switzerland had a really simple question and it was similar to some other people's questions and she says, "Is every judgment about another person a projection?"

[09:35] GANGAJI: Well, first of all, I think we need to back up just a little bit. If we are judging projection or illusion as wrong, that's useless and it just sets up another split in ego and superego. So what if every judgment is a projection? What does that mean? If that's just the nature of the way our brains work that we project, and then part of that projection is then we make a judgment, or discrimination, if we're putting a positive spin on it. If we just suspend judgment about that, then we recognize we are in relationship with ourselves. That there's only *one* here and projection is the way that this relationship comes about. We can actually appreciate that judgment appears in projection and we can appreciate that the projection, as illusion, can be recognized and maybe judgment can be suspended. And we can, can, *not* take projection personally. It's simply the way our minds work.

[10:48] GANGAJI CONT'D: I know that one of the reactions, and there were a lot of reactions really, I'm happy to report from our last conversation about projection, was really defending someone who was in a new relationship. Well, this is not projection. But the necessity to defend against projection means we're judging it. "Projection is wrong." This isn't projection, this is real and what you say about real life. We have to recognize that what gets translated through our senses is *not* real. It's a projection! It's the illusion! And it's not *wrong*, it's not *bad*. And we don't even have to transcend it. But to be free, we have to be willing to be humbled by the recognition that we cannot know how big it is, how vast it is. But we can recognize when love appears within us, or is evoked by another aspect of ourselves, we can recognize that this dance of projection is the dance of Self. The dance of God. The dance of Life. And then we can take responsibility for our negative projections and we can recognize our positive projections originate where we are. Love originates where you are. So, I hope that's not too abstract. When you say 'real life' I absolutely agree. I don't want these conversations to be abstractions. But in this case when we're talking about projection, the truth is we don't know what real life is. Our conclusion about real life is based on either a judgment, which I heard a little bit in that question - I'm not sure that there was judgment there - but it seemed to me that the judgment about judgment, that it's some idea that we shouldn't project and if we're free we won't project, but I'm saying as long as you're a human being and your brain is functioning, there's projection - that's the way it works.

[13:04] HILLARY: When I flip it around, which is what most of the letters that you received were about - "What do we do when people project onto us?" For example, Joseph - he lives in Paris, he says that there are those around him that project on to him, that his spiritual life is a form of escapism and he's not sure how to deal with that.

[13:25] GANGAJI: Well, first of all, as he recognizes, people are projecting that on him. And if he doesn't deal with it, if he simply opens to it, as a projection *and* opens to it as a projection from another aspect of his own self, then it can be really met and he can ask/inquire, "Is my spirituality a form of escapism?" He can use that projection as a basis for really discovering, "Is that/does that have any credibility - is that so?" Rather than trying to fix it, people *do* project - we *all* project. That's what I mean, that's the way, that's the way our brains work and our brains then project and generate cultures and societies and relationships. Some of those are positive, and some of those are negative, and some of those are neutral. But they're all about surviving, and if we're willing, in this moment, to just take a second, and not have your attention be about survival, then it's all just sound and lights and energy and vibrations. And some of its sound and fury and it signifies nothing, and some of it is ecstatic sound of OM and signifies everything, but in order to discover that, we have to first be willing to be still.

[15:06] HILLARY: I have great compassion for the suffering that goes with projection, whether it's receiving or projecting on to somebody, and Anya, from Germany, actually was saying that she's just worn out by it, it feels like an illness, she calls it 'taking everything personally.' So, I think you answered her question, but she said "So, is it really so, that everything that I experience in the outside is always just a reflection of myself?"

[15:37] GANGAJI: I would say yes and no. There's a way that you can take that as all just a projection of myself and that becomes this great burden or this great, you know if I'm sick that means I have projected that on to myself or if someone hates me that means that I have projected that on to myself but usually in those cases, we are limiting 'myself' to this one human form, this one tiny little aspect of brain function, of heartbeat, whereas 'myself' is the whole universe from time, limitless time, backward and forward and present. Billions of people in this particular moment of time. So if you really say "yes, it's all a projection of my own self," then you're taking in the whole cosmos and you're not separating the person that you have identified as other, as separate from your own self. And it's then part of the sound and, some of it painful, but all of it - totally mysterious and grand of this cosmic *and* very personal life that we live.

[16:58] HILLARY: Well, this is a perfect time for me to bring up my quantum physics question, and I actually don't know much about quantum physics, but I was reading a book on quantum physics a few months ago and there was this part, a couple of parts that stood out to me, that have to do with this subject. The first one was the idea that atoms are made up mostly of energy rather than matter, they are mostly made up of what you can't see - made up of no thing, I guess I would say. And secondly, that matter does not exist once it's observed and that the form it takes is based on the observer. So that reminded me of, you know, what Ramana says about, even the body is illusion.

[17:47] GANGAJI: Yes, that's right and if you really observe, which then we move out of the theoretical aspect, if you really observe any aspect of your body, whether that's your emotional body, or your physical body, or your mental body, but you hone in on it - you will find only space. That's the nature of inquiry, that's the result of inquiry. Space with some wave action that disappears into space, some point that opens into space. This is the absolute possibility of living that is not separate from the brain function that then takes that space and gives it form so that this particular unit, this human unit, can better survive. It's all so *wondrous*. And we can stand in awe of it, or we can work to order it further. And if we work to order it further, we miss the mystery. There's this huge mystery that really can stop us in our tracks, where we suspend our judgment around others - whether it's coming toward us or

toward them. Around the 'others' that inhabit our own minds, the 'others' that go by this one name that you go by. We can suspend judgment and just recognize that all of these aspects of the dream, coming from the same dreamer, is consciousness, and that no aspect has any life separate from that. Then projection is just simply, as I said, it's *Leela*, it's a play of consciousness. And we can take responsibility for our negative projections, which generate unnecessary suffering in us or in others when they're projected out. And we can take responsibility when people project - when other aspects of our self also called 'people', project negatively onto us. It's not like you just lay down and roll over, it's like you just *open*. And there may be a dynamic interplay that is totally surprising. To open doesn't mean you do a certain thing a certain way. 'Open' means that you discover - how are you in this ruthless play of consciousness, in this particular moment? If you suspend judgment, you suspend your ideas of projection being good or bad, and you're here. What else is here? What is always here?

[20:48] HILLARY: I'm so glad that you brought up that point about it's not about 'rolling over' because somebody did write in about being in an abusive relationship and they would often take the blame by spiritualizing it - "oh there must be something in my childhood that's making this thing manifest in my life", or something like that. And that way of spiritualizing, umm... or some of it I think comes from the culture sometimes of being a woman that maybe, that we tend to do that more. I don't know if people agree with me on that, but I am just saying that. But that this person was saying that she spiritualized it so she ended up staying longer.

[21:33] GANGAJI: Well, you know, I mean, that can be useful too. When you say 'spiritualize it', you know people hear it's all projection and then they do something with that. But if we recognize it's all projection, then we're actually standing up in this karmic tide of maybe something in our life, or at least something in our genetic structure, or something in our conditioning, our early memory, our early putting together of the universe, did generate this particular situation that's in front of you and it may be quite useful to just stop and take it in. But if we then make that a rule - that's what I think you're referring to when you say 'spiritualizing it', it becomes what we *should do*. It's not what we should do. We are free to live. We are free to stay in relationships that are unpleasant to discover what we need to discover, if there's anything, and we are free to leave them - immediately! And this is what gets lost in what you're calling 'spiritualizing' things - we just take another dogma, and we make it the way we should behave, or the way we should think or feel, and we get more and more bound. So that's why I'm speaking so much about projection and I don't want this idea or this notion of projection to serve bondage. It's possible that we can recognize it as part of a useful bondage that keeps the molecules of the particular human surviving. But if we can recognize that, and recognize the *vastness* that is beyond that, that we have no conception of - that our brain is not able at this point to codify, then there is the possibility of opening, and we are happy for our human brains, we're happy for this power of projection because the power of the human mind can also see through the projection and doesn't need to make it right or wrong. And can see that it's oneself, seeing oneself.

[23:54] HILLARY: Frankly, most of the questions that came to you Gangaji were on a very practical level. So for example, Sophine - *Sophine, I hope I'm saying your name correctly* - she wrote in on Facebook and she said, her question to you was, "How do we know someone is projecting on to us? If we have patterns of people-pleasing when and where is the moment of realizing that you've fallen into the spell of taking on someone else's projection?"

[24:24] GANGAJI: Well, it's all projection. So, if you take this moment and recognize that you have fallen under the spell of projection, that that's the way your brain operates. But in this moment - if you don't follow any thought about what happened to you in the past or who loves you or who doesn't really love you or who's using you or misusing you, you just stop - for a moment. In this moment then, there's no projection. There's life - still. That's not to say in the next moment when someone comes in and says, "Oh, you promised me this or you were like this yesterday, what happened?" that you aren't in the play of projection - you are. It's part of what it means to be a human being. But you have the capacity to be smart in this play of projection, to be intelligent - to recognize when you are suffering unnecessarily by other's projections on you or your projection on others or your projection on yourself or the whole infinite complexity of projections. You just have the capacity to stop, to retreat. Then your life is bigger and from that bigger life you have more intelligence just to live more freely. You can ask yourself more truthfully, what do I want? What do I love? What do I cherish? And you're not asking that in that moment then to get something or to keep anything away. You're asking it out of openness. But to assume that you can be free of projections is to assume that you can be free of your mind, and you *can* be, in an instant. And that instant can inform all the other instances.

[26:22] GANGAJI CONT'D: But the play of Leela is bigger than your one mind. It's the vastness of the whole cosmos, it's bigger than the Earth, it's bigger than the Milky Way, it's bigger than our neighboring galaxies - it's incomprehensible. And our projecting power of mind is just a way to make it comprehensible to make it, from where you're sitting to the door. You're projecting the door, you're projecting the walls, you're projecting that you're sitting. There's nothing wrong with that - that's the projecting onto the screen of the mind originates in the truth of the self. But you can be free and you can be intelligent and really I think that that's the value of this whole conversation is that you can be willing to see that projection is everywhere. You don't have to defend against it, you don't have to fix it, you don't have to deny it. But you can be intelligent about it, and you can recognize when you're projecting love on another, that that love is first coming from you. And it's true there are certain others who evoke great love in you, as there are certain others - and by 'others' I also mean aspects of your own inner life - that evoke animosity. That's part of the chemistry and the mystery of what it means to be one and another. Whether it's within your mind, or outside your mind, it's all the same - inside and outside are projected.

[28:04] HILLARY: This subject of projection, I think when it comes to you, it's particularly pertinent because of the nature of who you are, you have experienced thousands and thousands and thousands of projections over the years of what people think, what they think your life is like, what they think your life isn't like, and I count myself among them because you've busted me before on my own projections onto you (laughter). So, I wanted to ask Karen's question here because, I don't know if it fits into that same category, but she wanted to know, "How does awakening change the relationship to negative reactions? Do such reactions disappear entirely or is the reactivity still there with a new way of seeing the projection/connection to the object of aversion?"

[28:57] GANGAJI: All of the above.

[28:59] HILLARY: Hmmm

(Silence)

[29:03] GANGAJI: There's no formula for awakening. When we're searching for a formula we're searching for a dogma - we want to know what will happen when. And that's based on this desire to survive. If you have no formula - you are simply awake. You are living freely. And that includes freedom to react. You don't have to be a saint to be awake.

[29:45] HILLARY: For those of you who wrote in via Gangaji's Facebook page this month - that's the Gangaji Community Facebook page, or if you wrote directly in to our email address here at Gangaji Radio, I just want to thank you. Gangaji received all your letters, as you know - she always does, and if I could've found a way to fit every single one of your letters in, I certainly would have done that this month. But I just want to thank you for writing period. And next month, we're doing a show, it's called *The Seed of Doubt* and I wanted to talk to Gangaji about any doubts we may have as parents, as partners, as friends. Doubts we may have about our capabilities, how we look, what others think of us, and essentially who we are. I intentionally decided to share this topic with the other program that I often mention here, that's Gangaji's live monthly webcast. And one of the things that's great about that, that I love about that, is you can call in and you can ask Gangaji a question directly. So, both programs are covering the same subject of doubt, that's for April. And you can always sign-up for the webcast With Gangaji that's ongoing, by just going to the website, that's gangaji.org. And for us, for *A Conversation with Gangaji*, we're always here with a new episode every month. Please feel free to send Gangaji a question or a comment that you might have about doubt, or anything else really. The address is gangajiradio@gangaji.org. Always so good to be here with you. See you next time. Take care.