



James Tobin, Ph.D.  
15615 Alton Parkway | Suite 450  
Irvine, CA 92618  
(949) 338-4388  
[www.jamestobinphd.com](http://www.jamestobinphd.com)

Psychotherapy  
Couples  
Parent Guidance  
Buddhist Psychology and Mindfulness  
Executive Coaching

# Group Seminar Audio Series

## You May Not Like Who You Are to Others

How you are perceived matters much more than who consciously intend to be. And, by extension, who you are is typically very different than how you are perceived. A wide body of psychological research and theory suggests that the social world is dominated by projections, distortions, and highly personalized biases. How you impact others is a component of self-understanding that many people do not really investigate or ever gain access to. Yet, what you represent to, and elicit in others, activates powerful relational and social dynamics that ultimately dictate your experience in the world.

### Key Excerpts:

- *What humans express to each other is largely nonverbal and unconscious. People “read” in you something about themselves. And so you are always being distorted. Not only are you being distorted, but you are also being pulled into a dynamic around the distortion.*
- *One common distortion is for people to “see” in you a part of themselves that they have difficulty recognizing and accepting. What they don’t like about themselves they’d rather not like about you.*
- *Another way biases are generated occurs as people see in you what they assume not to be possible for themselves. This is envy and it is primarily unconscious. In contrast, jealousy is more conscious.*

# You May Not Like Who You Are to Others

## Key Excerpts (continued)

- *Sometimes what you may elicit in others is the memory of a previous figure in their lives. This is known as transference. Displacement refers to reminding others of a person they might be having issues with now, in their current life.*
- *The butterflies felt when there is an intense attraction, say for example between two people meeting for the first time, usually signals transference. The insidious power of transference is featured in the film "Damage." Love that is really "true" centers on an intimacy in which all of the distortions and biases of transference once existing between two people have been broken down.*
- *"Scene-ing" is transference applied to groups and systems. Previously unresolved issues from one's past might get played out in a group of people in which different individuals represent different figures from the original scene. This is a very common dynamic in the workplace*
- *Instead of being held captive by what you elicit in others, and the biases and misperceptions that follow, efforts can be made to interrupt and overcome these powerful forces. A key goal be to try to gain an understanding of how you tend to be distorted and in what ways by what particular types of people. If you can identify these patterns, you may begin to understand the "cascading" that occurs in your life, i.e., once you are distorted, how you typically respond which then creates typical reactions to you by others. Cascading is this domino effect that ensues once distortions are reacted to.*
- *The trick is to learn how you are a lightning rod for certain projections and then to seek to dilute these projections. If you are able to dilute them, you will not draw attention so easily to one particular quality or characteristic.*
- *Taking things too personally only promotes transference, projections, and other distortions.*
- *If you become embedded in a scene that is especially difficult to dislodge from, you may ultimately have to abandon the scene all together.*