

The Shadow in Superteams – Guidance Document

1. What is the Shadow?

In Jungian psychology, the Shadow refers to the unconscious aspects of ourselves that we do not identify with.

It is not only “negative” traits such as selfishness, anger, or arrogance, but also positive qualities we disown, such as confidence, ambition, or leadership.

Jung wrote:

“The shadow personifies everything that the subject refuses to acknowledge about himself and yet is always thrusting itself upon him.” (CW11, §134)

In Superteams, the Shadow shows up in teamwork when disowned traits influence collaboration, communication, and decision-making without people realising it.

2. Seduction and Repulsion

We often encounter our shadow through two strong reactions to traits in others:

- **Repulsion:** Traits we reject and cannot stand in others (e.g., arrogance, laziness, victimhood). These often point to parts of ourselves we deny.
Example: rejecting “selfishness” while secretly needing more self-care.
- **Seduction:** Traits we secretly admire or long for but don’t admit (e.g., charm, confidence, recognition). These are qualities we repress out of fear of seeming arrogant, manipulative, or egotistical.

Both reactions are signs of shadow energy.

- **Repulsion** is often projection (putting what we dislike in ourselves onto others).
- **Seduction** is often envy or longing (wanting what we don’t allow ourselves to claim).

Here are examples that could be used

Repulsive Traits (things people reject in others, often because they deny them in themselves)

1. **Charm to manipulate** – being strategic with warmth/likability for personal gain.
2. **Playing the victim** – avoiding responsibility by emphasising suffering or helplessness.
3. **Arrogance** – acting superior, dismissing others’ contributions.
4. **Micromanaging** – controlling others’ every move, not trusting competence.

5. **Laziness** – avoiding effort, letting others carry the load.
6. **Conflict-seeking** – picking fights, stirring tension.
7. **Selfishness** – prioritising own needs over team needs.
8. **Inconsistency** – saying one thing, doing another.
9. **Neediness** – constant reassurance, attention-seeking.
10. **Over-competitiveness** – treating colleagues as rivals instead of partners.

Seductive Traits (things people admire or envy, but don't allow themselves to own)

1. **Charisma** – drawing people in effortlessly.
2. **Confidence** – self-assured presence, even under pressure.
3. **Decisiveness** – making bold calls quickly.
4. **Influence** – shaping opinions and outcomes with ease.
5. **Recognition-seeking** – openly wanting praise and attention.
6. **Ambition** – unapologetically striving for more.
7. **Independence** – going your own way without needing approval.
8. **Power** – directing resources, people, and decisions.
9. **Creativity** – producing novel, original ideas.
10. **Non-conformity** – breaking rules, doing things differently.

3. Why It Matters for Teams

Shadow dynamics affect teamwork because disowned traits leak out unconsciously. They show up as projection, conflict, or hidden resistance. When integrated, these same traits can strengthen collaboration, accountability, and trust.

Examples:

- **Control:** Healthy when it creates clarity and accountability. Shadowed when it suppresses creativity or forces outcomes.
- **Recognition:** Healthy when celebrating contributions. Shadowed when a hidden need for validation creates resentment.

- **Charm:** Healthy when used transparently to build rapport. Shadowed when seen as manipulation or used without awareness.
 - **Victimhood:** Healthy version is vulnerability and asking for help. Shadowed version is avoidance of responsibility.
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4. Integration in Superteams

The purpose of shadow work in Superteams is not therapy. It is about making better active choices in teamwork. By recognising seductive and repulsive traits, participants can reduce projection, take ownership, and integrate hidden aspects of themselves in a constructive way.

Practical outcomes of integration include:

- Moving from blame to ownership (“*I see this in me as well*”).
 - Turning unconscious reactions into conscious choices.
 - Reclaiming hidden strengths (e.g., influence, ambition, assertiveness).
 - Building resilience and trust in the team by normalising that everyone has a shadow.
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Summary

The Shadow in Superteams is about recognising what we disown in ourselves — whether seductive or repulsive — and integrating it so that it serves collaboration instead of sabotaging it.