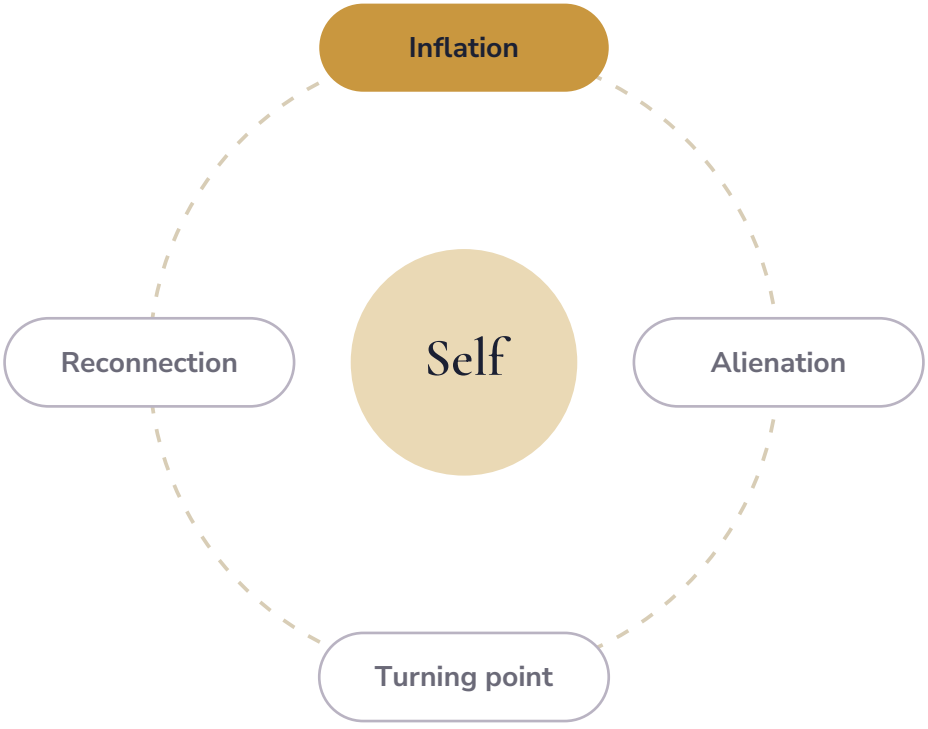
THE INDIVIDUATION JOURNEY

Companion Workbook

Module 2 · Inflation

When the small self grows too large



Shawn Arnott · psychedelicbuddhist.com

2

Inflation

When the small self grows too large

IN THE VIDEO

- **Inflation** is the ego taking on the qualities of the Self and swelling beyond its proper size.
- We are all **born in it**, and we return to it at every new stage of growth.
- **Adam** reaching for the fruit and **Prometheus** stealing fire tell the same story: consciousness is taken, not given, and it costs something.
- Edinger calls this the **necessary crime**. Without it we would never become anyone at all.
- **Icarus** and the Greek idea of **hybris** show the other face, where inflation becomes foolhardy and a fall follows.
- It has many everyday faces, including **negative inflation**: too much guilt rather than too much pride.

In this section

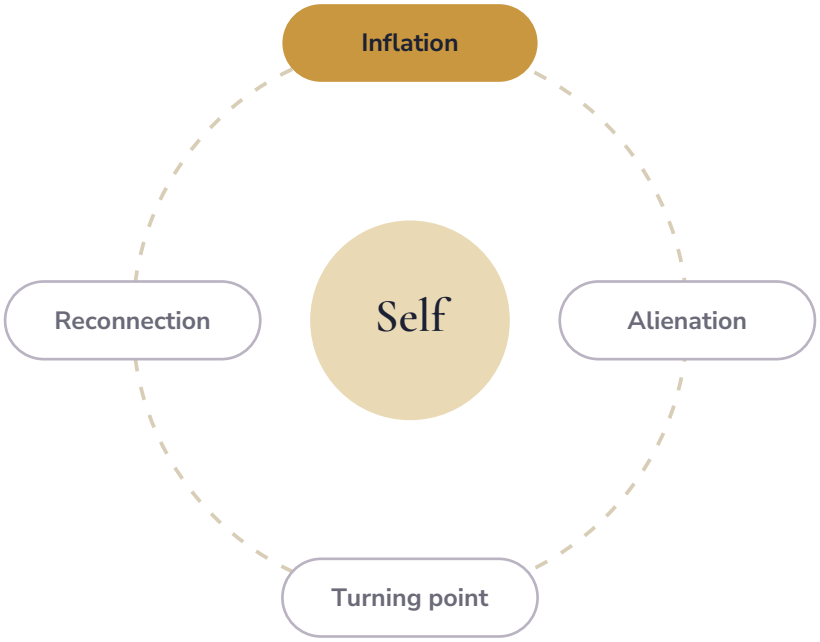
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CHECK-IN

Where am I?

Date _____

Mark an **X** wherever you feel you are right now. Trust your first instinct.



What made you place your mark there?

Looking back through last week's journal, what stands out?

Anything from the circles you drew last week?

One word for how I feel today: _____

REFERENCE

Key ideas at a glance

Inflation	The ego identifying with the Self: something small taking on the qualities of something far larger, and swelling beyond its proper size.
Original inflation	The state we are all born into. In the beginning there is no ego yet, and all is Self. It leaves us with a lifelong nostalgia for our origins.
The necessary crime	To emerge at all, the ego must set itself against the unconscious it came from. Consciousness is taken by a willful act, and it carries a real cost.
Hybris	Claiming for oneself what belongs to the gods: crossing proper human limits.
Aidos	Reverence for powers greater than oneself, and the shame felt when they are transgressed.
Nemesis	The correction that follows when reverence is absent. On our map, it is the next stage: alienation.
Negative inflation	An unbounded sense of guilt or suffering. Being uniquely terrible is still a claim to be unique.
Too much of anything	Taking on too much of anything exceeds human limits. Too much humility counts as much as too much pride.

Based on Edinger, Ego and Archetype, ch. 1, "Inflation and Original Wholeness," "Adam and Prometheus," "Hybris and Nemesis."

REFLECT

My own inflations

Everyone experiences inflation. The useful question is what shape it takes in you.

1 Recall a time you felt certain you were right, and later found you were not. What did the certainty feel like from the inside, before it broke?

2 Where in your life do you quietly feel like the exception: the person the ordinary limits don't quite apply to?

3 Edinger says almost all of us carry an illusion that there will always be more time. Where do you notice that assumption in how you live?

REFLECT

The step I keep not taking

Edinger describes people whose growth has stalled at exactly the point where a step would feel like a betrayal. Take your time here; this page is often the heart of the module.

1 What is the step you keep not taking? Name it plainly, without justifying it.

2 Who would it disappoint, and what do you imagine they would say?

3 What has not taking it cost you so far? And what might it cost if another year passes?

REFLECT

Too much of anything

Go gently here. Noticing that you take on too much blame is useful. If guilt or emptiness has been heavy for a long time and isn't lifting, that deserves real support rather than analysis. Please see the Support page at the back.

1 Where do you take on too much? Too much blame, too much responsibility, too much humility, too much caring for others?

2 Is there a way in which you feel uniquely bad, uniquely at fault, or uniquely burdened? Write it out and then read it back slowly.

3 What would a proportionate, human-sized version of that sound like?

PRACTICE

Too big, too small

Each day, catch two moments: one where you felt larger than life, and one where you felt smaller than you are. Both are the same swelling, running in opposite directions. Noticing is the whole practice.

Day	Too big: certain, entitled, the exception	Too small: unworthy, uniquely at fault
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

Any dreams of flying, falling or high places this week?

PRACTICE

Your journal, week three

Same rhythm as before. Keep collecting dreams without interpreting them.

Day 1

Date _____

THREE LINES ABOUT MY DAY

A DREAM, EVEN A FRAGMENT

ONE STRONG REACTION

Day 2

Date _____

THREE LINES ABOUT MY DAY

A DREAM, EVEN A FRAGMENT

ONE STRONG REACTION

Day 3

Date _____

THREE LINES ABOUT MY DAY

A DREAM, EVEN A FRAGMENT

ONE STRONG REACTION

Day 4

Date _____

THREE LINES ABOUT MY DAY

A DREAM, EVEN A FRAGMENT

ONE STRONG REACTION

Day 5

Date _____

THREE LINES ABOUT MY DAY

A DREAM, EVEN A FRAGMENT

ONE STRONG REACTION

Day 6

Date _____

THREE LINES ABOUT MY DAY

A DREAM, EVEN A FRAGMENT

ONE STRONG REACTION

Day 7

Date _____

THREE LINES ABOUT MY DAY

A DREAM, EVEN A FRAGMENT

ONE STRONG REACTION

RETURN

Looking back on Module 2

Read back through your log and your journal before answering.

1 Which column filled up faster this week, too big or too small? What do you make of that?

2 What form does inflation most often take in you? Give it a name in your own words.

3 Looking at the step you named, does it feel like a necessary crime or an Icarus flight? What tells you?

4 What do you want to carry into Module 3?

NEXT Module 3 · Alienation: the fall, the wound and the exile

SUPPORT

When you need more support

Inner work can stir up strong feelings and old memories. That's a natural part of the process, and it deserves care. Edinger observed that our connection to the deeper self is often restored through being genuinely accepted by another person. We aren't meant to do this alone.

Please reach out if you notice

- Despair or emptiness that doesn't lift
- Feeling cut off from reality or from the people around you
- Thoughts of harming yourself

If you're in immediate danger

Call your local emergency number right away (for example, 911 in Canada and the US, 999 in the UK, 112 across the EU, 000 in Australia).

Crisis lines

Canada	9-8-8 Suicide Crisis Helpline: call or text 988
United States	988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: call or text 988
UK and Ireland	Samaritans: call 116 123
Australia	Lifeline: call 13 11 14
Anywhere else	Find a helpline in your country at findahelpline.com

Ongoing support

A therapist or your doctor is a good place to start. To find a Jungian analyst, see the International Association for Analytical Psychology (IAAP) at iaap.org.

MY PEOPLE AND PLACES

Someone I trust _____

My therapist or doctor _____

My local crisis line _____

Numbers were accurate as of September 2026. Please check they're current for where you live.