



Why NOT Judge?

- Judgments are hard to ignore, because they give us a sense of being right and being better than or superior to another. This superiority and self-righteousness feels good to the ego.
- Judgments never reflect your True Nature or Essential Self. Judgments serve a purpose, but don't achieve what you hope they will. Judgments cause you to try to change others. People rarely change others. If they do, it's at the expense of a loving relationship.
- You don't have to change anything or anyone, except your relationship to your own (judgmental) thoughts.

Relationships Come F.I.R.S.T.
(Formula for Improving Relationship Success Tools)

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Notice, Accept and Release Your Judgments

- *Becoming more loving is largely a matter of becoming more conscious of what we are thinking, and then choosing a more loving response than the automatic one, which is likely to be the ego's response.*
- Refuse to get involved in the judgments that pop into your mind and, above all, don't speak them.
- As judgment arises, notice, recognize it as judgment, and put attention somewhere else, like on appreciating whatever positives you can find in that person or relationship.
- Notice how you feel the next time you catch yourself judging and criticizing someone. You have the power to choose not to judge and criticize (internally or externally), and when you make that choice, it is possible to get in touch with who we really are—with Essence.

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The Difference between Judgment & Discernment.

- **Discernment is the ability to notice objective, relevant differences** among activities, people, objects, etc. Without the ability to discern, one wouldn't be able to get through life, because it helps you make decisions.
- **Judgment looks at those differences and labels them good or bad when the difference that's recognized in people's abilities, judgment makes inferences about their overall worthiness.**

So if someone is different or imperfect, a discerning person will recognize this, but not necessarily *judge* the difference as good or bad, right or wrong, just different. Differences and imperfections can be forgiven, accepted, even appreciated! Judging them makes them wrong.

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Notice, Accept and Release Your Judgments

by Jody Johnston Pawel, LSW, CFLE

"It's not our partner's responsibility to change just because we have conditioning that demands that. Wanting our partner to change is not enough reason for him or her to change, although the ego thinks it is and tries to manipulate by claiming, 'If you loved me, you would change.' If we want a loving relationship, we have to take responsibility for our conditioning and the feelings generated by it, and choose to give up our judgments and attempts to change our partner. When we do this, we discover true love because our partner will love us for being so loving, accepting, and allowing. There is nothing that opens someone's heart more than someone with an open heart. Conversely, there is nothing that closes someone's heart more than someone with a closed heart--and that means someone who is judging." --- From Choosing Love

WHY NOT JUDGE?

Judgments are probably the #1 barrier to having loving relationships, because they lead to criticism, which poisons the relationship, creating resentment.

It's part of our culture to judge (Idol, Reality shows, politics, etc.) People take delight in pointing out faults in others, criticizing, and having opinions.

Judgments are hard to ignore, because they give us a sense of being right and being better than or superior to another. This superiority and self-righteousness feels good to the ego. That is the payoff for judging and one reason we judge and continue to do so even when we see that judging and criticizing is not getting us what we want from the other person, including that person's love. **When we choose to judge someone, we settle for this feeling of superiority and self-righteousness instead of love and the good feelings that come from being loving, kind, accepting, and understanding.**

We tend to make this choice instead of being loving because it is our default position as human beings; it is the path of least resistance. We are programmed to not make the most loving choice, oddly enough. So to get what we all really want, which is to be loving and to be loved, we have to learn to overcome some of the negative programming we have that keeps us making choices that are destructive to our relationships.

Judgments never reflect your True Nature or Essential Self. Judgments serve a purpose, but don't achieve what you hope they will. Judgments cause you to try to change others. People rarely change others. If they do, it's at the expense of a loving relationship.

You don't have to change anything or anyone, except your relationship to your own (judgmental) thoughts.

You don't need your judgments. You have never needed your judgments. They have never served you, but only obscured and undermined the love, wisdom, and happiness that are possible. Love and happiness are possible because it is your true nature to love and to experience happiness, peace, and joy.

WHAT TO DO

Most of us are not that aware of what is going on in our mind. We tend to accept the thoughts that go through our mind and act on them or speak them without questioning them first. We don't tend to ask ourselves if what we're thinking is true or useful. We often don't question what the result will be if we believe our thoughts and act on or give voice to them. The trouble with this is that our thoughts are often unkind and untrue, and responding to them without evaluating them first results in a lot of trouble and pain to ourselves and others. ***Becoming more loving is largely a matter of becoming more conscious of what we are thinking, and then choosing a more loving response than the automatic one, which is likely to be the ego's response.***

“Love and relationship have to become more important than having your way, more important than your conditioning and how you like things done. The way you put love first is to refuse to get involved in the judgments that pop into your mind and, above all, don't speak them. The reason to not get involved with your judgments mentally is that doing so leads to believing them and speaking them. The more you dwell on a judgment, the more real and true it seems. Judgments cause us to feel bad about someone (and bad about ourselves), so we naturally want to do something to change that person so that we no longer have to feel bad.”

As judgment arises, notice, recognize it as judgment, and put attention somewhere else, like on appreciating whatever positives you can find in that person or relationship. When you have thoughts of judgment, don't engage in them. Refuse to get involved in judgment, which will help you avoid criticism.

“Notice how you feel the next time you catch yourself judging and criticizing someone, including those you aren't even close to, such as people in the media. Judgment and criticism don't feel good, and you don't have to feel that way. **We have the power to choose not to judge and criticize (internally or externally), and when we make that choice, it is possible to get in touch with who we really are--with Essence.** Essence is an experience of contentment, peace, joy, happiness, awe, love, gratitude, and wonderment. *That is who we really are, and the only thing that can obscure our true nature is believing the ego's negative evaluations and stories about everyone and everything. Change in the world can still happen without our judgments because the wisdom that is our true nature moves us to act wisely and lovingly in the world. Our judgments only interfere with that.”*

The Difference between Judgment And Discernment.

- **Discernment** is the ability to notice objective, relevant differences among activities, people, objects, etc. Without the ability to discern, one wouldn't be able to get through life, because it helps you make decisions.
- **Judgment** looks at those differences and labels them good or bad when the difference that's recognized in people's abilities, judgment makes inferences about their overall worthiness.

So if someone is different or imperfect, a discerning person will recognize this, but not necessarily *judge* the difference as good or bad, right or wrong, just different. Differences and imperfections can be forgiven, accepted, even appreciated! Judging them makes them wrong.

Sources:

- "[8 Steps for Transforming Relationships](#)," by Gina Lake, a course at DailyOM.com
- [Choosing Love: Moving from Ego to Essence in Relationships](#), by Gina Lake
- "Don't Be Judgmental, Be Discerning: What does it take to be discerning, but not judgmental?" by Raj Raghunathan Ph.D., May 10, 2011, [Psychology Today.com](#)

Explorations from Lesson 1: Notice, Accept, and Ignore Release Judgments
from "[8 Steps for Transforming Relationships](#)," by Gina Lake, a course at DailyOM.com

Practices: To be done throughout the week:

1. Whenever you feel an urge to judge your partner, examine the conditioning (e.g., desires, beliefs, opinions, preferences, fears, expectations, demands) behind that judgment. Every judgment is a disguised "should" or "should not." What "should" or "should not" are you imposing on your partner? Our judgments are an attempt to get our partner to change his or her behavior so that we don't have to feel the discomfort that our own conditioning is causing. When others do things we don't like, that is, when they don't conform to our conditioning, we feel afraid, angry, ashamed, or embarrassed. In an attempt to get rid of these feelings, we try to change our partner by judging or criticizing him or her: "If only he or she would change, I wouldn't feel this way!" **Notice how your judgments are an attempt to ease the discomfort that is caused by your own conditioning--not by your partner, but by your desires and demands that your partner be a certain way.**

2. If a judgment arises, just let it be there without doing anything about it. What is that like to just let that judgment be there? Your ego won't want you to stay with this exercise. It may try to talk you out of just being with the judgment, or it might offer a more concealed judgment or one that sounds a little nicer. **Are there feelings that accompany this judgment?** Just let them be here as well without doing anything else with them. The more you practice noticing your judgments and feelings and just letting them be there without doing anything else, the weaker these judgments and feelings will become. What empowers our thoughts and feelings is acting them out. If you don't want to be at the mercy of your negative thoughts (judgments) and feelings, then just let them come and go in your mind without identifying with them or giving voice to them. Don't fight with them or push them away, but allow them the space to come and go, as all thoughts naturally do. Your thoughts come out of nowhere and disappear into nowhere. You have the ability to empower them by giving them your attention or dis-empower them by not giving them your attention, which is accomplished by giving your attention to something else.

Explorations: Do just one of these explorations a day. When you've finished all three explorations, go back to each one and see if you can uncover any further insights.

1. There are certain judgments and criticisms you have about your partner that come up again and again and are probably causing conflict, stress, and a shutting down of love between you. What are they? Take some time to contemplate this. Make a list of them. What if you didn't have these judgments and the feelings that go with them? What would that be like? And what if you never expressed your judgments or criticisms? What would that be like? How would you feel? How would that change your relationship?

2. Look carefully at any resistances you may have to ignoring and not speaking the judgments and criticisms you have. What are you afraid will happen if you give up judging and criticizing? Are you afraid you will be a doormat, you will be unhappy, you will be taken advantage of, you will not be in control, you will lose power in the relationship? Is it your way of being strong? Is it your way of being smart? Is it your way of proving that you are an individual? How do you believe your judgments are serving you? What are you getting out of judging and criticizing? Spend at least ten minutes contemplating this question because it is a very important one. There are reasons, although mistaken ones, for clinging to our judgments and criticisms. Once we really see how ineffective and destructive our judgments are, they lose their power to capture our attention and make us do their bidding.

3. What are the negative ramifications of judging and criticizing? Does your partner fire back with criticisms? Does your partner withdraw, disengage? How does judging and criticizing make you feel about yourself? What is your self-image like when you are criticizing someone? Are you The Bitch, The Complainer, The Whiner, The Martyr, The Wronged One, The Raging Maniac, The Self-Righteous One, The Mother Hen, The Drama Queen, The Emasculator, The Boss, The Avenger, The Victim, or some other image? Our ego takes on these personas, but we are not our ego, and we can choose to not identify with and act out these personas. Our judgments cause negative feelings within ourselves and others--anger, resentment, hatred, desire for revenge, and even guilt and shame--and negative feelings are not only exhausting, but also can lead to physical illness. They shut down our own heart and the hearts of those around us. What price are you paying for your judgments and criticism? What is the cost to your relationships? Is it worth it?