

UNDERSTANDING JUDGMENTAL THINKING

As adapted from I'm Judgmental, You're Judgmental by Terry C. Cooper

Justifies ourselves, in spite of our faults
Understands only its own viewpoint
Denounces persons, rather than behavior or ideas
Grandiose thinking disconnects from humility
Makes us more and more alienated from our "dark side"
Enhances self-righteousness through putting down others
Needs other people's "sins" in order to dodge oneself
Turns away from grace and acceptance of self and others.
Avoids the anxiety of seeing life's complexities
Loves "labels" as a form of security

Justifies ourselves, in spite of our faults: Judgmental attitudes keep our attention off of ourselves and onto the shortcomings of others. A cyclical process of neglecting, projecting, and protecting is involved. We neglect to examine our consciences, avoiding the areas in our own lives that need work. Soon lack of awareness of shortcomings leads to the belief we have none.

Self-alienation, a low-grade sense of annoyance, some self-disgust and confusion result. The very image of ourselves from which we are alienated we now begin to see in others who targets for our own disgust and frustration. This keeps us from looking within our own selves. Projection becomes protection, insulation from having to look at ourselves. Ex. The alcoholic father obsessed with his son's pot problem

Understands only its own viewpoint: We are captive to our own rigid thoughts and believe that recognition of any legitimacy to the viewpoints of others automatically means giving up our own. This limits our relationships with others and keeps us from growing.

Denounces persons, rather than behavior or ideas: Judgmental mentality does not stop with judging the acts of behavior but insists on judging the entire person. We define the person by a singular behavior while all other aspects of the individual's personality fade.

Grandiose thinking disconnects from humility: Humility is replaced by a sense of moral superiority. Unable to walk in the shoes of others, we ignore any circumstances in their lives that may be contributing to their behavior. We believe that we are capable of evaluating the entire context of another person's life. Our viewpoint becomes a god as we forget our own limitations. Instead of judging the specific acts of others, we judge their entire existence.

Makes us more and more alienated from our "dark side": By being shocked by the actions of others, we remove attention from our own shortcomings. Very importantly, these harsh condemnations of others indicate a lack of grace and tender acceptance in our own lives.

Enhances self-righteousness though putting down others: By condemning others, we feel superior. We remove ourselves from the family of man, unconsciously aware that we are inflating ourselves by tearing down others. It is an unconscious move to protect our own purity.

Needs other people's "sins" in order to dodge oneself: We find our identity in what we are not. We need the faults of others to carry our shame for us, to avoid looking at ourselves.

Turns away from grace and acceptance of self and others: While we are judging others we are ignoring the life-changing power of unconditional love and acceptance. The non-judgmental acceptance of the person behind the behavior is the key to true Christianity and effective counseling.

A man who was entirely careless of spiritual things died and went to Hell. And he was much missed on earth by his old friends. His business manager went down to the gates of Hell to see if there were any chance of bringing him back. But, although he pleaded for the gates to be opened, the iron bars never yielded. His cricket captain went also and besought Satan to let him out just for the remainder of the season. But there was no response. His minister went also and argued, saying, "He was not altogether bad. Let him have another chance. Let him out just this once." Many other friends of his went also and pleaded with Satan saying, "Let him out. Let him out. Let him out." But when his mother came, she spoke no word of his release. Quietly, and with a strange catch in her voice, she said to Satan, "*Let me in.*" And immediately the great doors swung open upon their hinges. For love goes down through the gates of Hell and there redeems the damned.

Avoids the anxiety of seeing life's complexities: While we are not to approve or condone a behavior, we do need to understand the circumstances in which such a behavior arose. Highly judgmental people cannot make good counselors. They are not willing to enter the depths of the true dilemma nor invest the time and energy it takes to lovingly stand with someone in their situation.

Loves "labels" as a form of security: The underlying cause of the "good guy - bad guy" thinking is that it helps us to manage anxiety of seeing ourselves with our own faults, makes life convenient, and adds to our sense of superiority. We don't have to enter into the world of others or explore the grey areas in life that make us uncomfortable.

MAKING JUDGMENTS V.S. BEING JUDGMENTAL

Healthy Judgment	Judgmentalism
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• is the rational process of evaluating evidence and coming to well-thought out decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• is "emotional reasoning" that makes snap decisions based on superficial evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• is the necessary outcome of reflective, careful thinking, and the mark of a mind unafraid to decide	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• is the outcome of unreflective, careless thinking, and is the mark of a mind afraid to think analytically
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• soberly recognizes unresolved problems with our own viewpoint	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• refuses to recognize the "blindness" or limitation of our viewpoint
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• includes a willingness to change our mind	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• involves an unwillingness to change our mind
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• refuses to distrust another's motives unless we have solid evidence for doing so	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• presumes to know other person's motives without reasonable evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• involves holding to moral and religious concepts with charity and tolerance toward those who differ	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• clings tenaciously to moral and religious concepts with disrespect and intolerance toward those who differ
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• entails a denunciation of hurtful behavior and erroneous ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• denounces the <i>person</i> who adheres to erroneous ideas or destructive behavior.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• involves a concern for others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• is not concerned for others

