

Do We Have A Right To Judge Anyone?

“The least amount of **judging** we can do, the better off we are”, says Michael J Fox.

Yet we often **judge** others, and do not realise it. Regardless of the reason, we do not have a right to **judge** anyone. People hardly realise their own mistakes; instead they strive to point out someone else’s.

Despite our best efforts, we all **judge** others. It might be over small things, like a co-worker who took too long of a lunch break. Or it might be over bigger issues, such as a person who behaves selfishly or hurts our feelings.

Imagine you are walking through the woods and you see a small monkey. It looks cute and friendly. You approach and move to pet the monkey. Suddenly it snarls and tries to bite you. The monkey no longer seems cute and you feel fear and possibly anger. Then, as the wind blows, the leaves on the ground are carried away and you see the monkey has one of its legs caught in a trap. Now, you feel compassion for the monkey. You know it became aggressive because it is in pain and is suffering.

What can we learn from this story?

How can we become less judgmental?

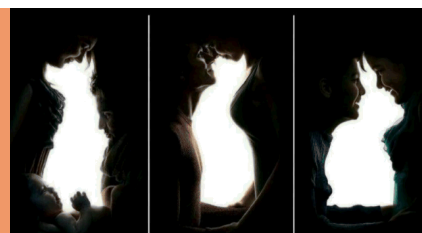
1. **Don’t blame yourself.** We are instinctively hard-wired for survival. When we see a monkey (or a person) that might bite us (literally or metaphorically), of course we feel threatened. We go into fight-flight-freeze mode, and are unable to see many possible reasons for another’s behaviour. We get tight and defensive. This is a normal first reaction. The key is to pause before we act out of this mode.
2. **Be mindful.** Although **judgment** is a natural instinct, try to catch yourself before you speak, or send that nasty email and do any potential harm. You cannot get your words back. Pause. See if you can understand where the person may be coming from. Try to rephrase your critical internal thought into a positive one, or at least a neutral one. After all, like that monkey in the trap, we really do not know the reasons for someone’s behaviour.
3. **Depersonalise.** When someone disagrees with us or somehow makes our life difficult, remember that it is typically not about us. It may be about their pain or struggle. Why not give others the benefit of the doubt? “Never underestimate the pain of a person,” Will Smith said, “because in all honesty, everyone is struggling. Some people are better at hiding it than others.”
4. **Look for basic goodness.** This takes practice, as our minds naturally scan for the negative, but if we try, we can almost always find something good about another person.
5. **Repeat the mantra, “Just like me.”** Remember, we are more alike than different. When you feel critical of someone, try to remind yourself that the other person loves their family **just like you do**, and wants to be happy and free of suffering, **just like you do**. Most

important, that person makes mistakes, **just like you do** ("**just like me**").

6. **Reframe**. When someone does something you do not like, perhaps think of it as they are simply solving a problem in a different way than you would. Or maybe they have a different timetable than you do. This may help you be more open-minded and accepting of their behaviour. The Dalai Lama says: "People take different roads seeking fulfillment and happiness. Just because they are not on your road does not mean they have gotten lost."
7. **Look at your own behaviour**. Sometimes, we may be **judging** someone for something that we do ourselves, or have done. For example, the next time you find yourself yelling at someone while you are driving, ask yourself, "Have I ever driven poorly?" Of course, we all have.
8. **Educate yourself**. When people do things that are annoying, they may have a hidden disability. For example, some people with poor social skills may have Asperger's syndrome (*a form of Autism Spectrum Disorder, is a developmental disorder. Young people with Asperger's Syndrome have a difficult time relating to others socially and their behaviour and thinking patterns can be rigid and repetitive*). So if someone's invading your personal space (as someone with Asperger's might), remember again, *it is not about you*. Albert Einstein said, "Everybody is a genius. But if you **judge** a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid."
9. **Give the person the benefit of the doubt**. No one wakes up in the morning and says, "I think I am going to be a jerk today." Most of us do the best we can with the resources we have at the moment.
10. **Feel good about you**. Brene' Brown says: "If I feel good about my parenting, I have no interest in **judging** other people's choices. If I feel good about my body, I don't go around making fun of other people's weight or appearance. We are hard on each other because we were using each other as a launching pad out of her own perceived deficiency."

Judging a person does
not define who they are.

It defines
who you are.



If you look at these photos they look like a dog, rabbit and cat. But when you zoom on them individually you will see the beauty of photography ...

That is how life is, until you zoom on people's lives you wouldn't understand who they really are.

HOW CAN WE BECOME LESS JUDGMENTAL?



1 Don't blame yourself

2 Be mindful

3 Depersonalise

4 Look for basic goodness

5 Repeat the mantra, "Just like me."

Reframe **6**

Look at your own behaviour **7**

Educate yourself **8**

Give the person the benefit of the doubt **9**

Feel good about you **10**

