

# The Hidden Side of Judgment

By Deepak Chopra

Not every person gets to the point in their life when they question the value of judging against others. After all, society depends upon a healthy regard for the difference between right and wrong. Many people, perhaps the vast majority, are content with a system where rules are meant to be obeyed, lawbreakers are punished, and so on.

**But the mechanism of justice is not the whole of life.**

When I was young, I was struck by a passing remark from the lips of a spiritual teacher: 'Where love is not, there must be laws.'

At a certain point, a new and different kind of view begins to oppose our certainty that we have a right to judge others. Insight begins to dawn. It's not the same insight for everyone, yet I'd guess that something like the following begins to make sense:

Judge not lest you be judged. We condemn in others what we are afraid to see in ourselves. Blame is the projection of guilt. Us-versus-them thinking is destructive to both sides of the equation.

How would you label such thoughts? If you are a rigid adherent to "an eye for an eye," these insights are corrosive; they must be rejected to keep your black-and-white moral code intact. But there's a reason, despite the intricacies and cruelties of the system of law, why the spiritual side of our nature is attracted to non-judgment.

We want to love and be loved. At a deeper level, we realize that all suffering is ultimately related to self-judgment.

Seeing yourself as fallen from grace, you feel justified in treating everyone else as fallen, to one degree or another. Yet at a certain, highly unpredictable point, the urge arises to move beyond self-judgment, and when that urge arises, the need to judge others begins to decrease. There is an evolutionary impulse in everyone, or so the world's wisdom traditions teach us. We believe in our higher or better selves. We want to reconnect with the soul. The selfish demands of the ego wear us down and begin to seem pointless.

Whatever the trigger, moving beyond judgment is evolutionary.

A breakthrough is possible, after which a path opens up. Walking this path transforms the entire person, over a period of time, and leads to many stages of realization. At one stage you may want to rebel against rules and authority. That can be a satisfying stance, but eventually it is seen as untenable. At another stage you may feel humbled and therefore more judgmental against yourself than ever before. That, too, is just a stage. Ahead are various roles we attempt to play—martyr, saint, ascetic, child of God, child of Nature, etc. It would be too ironic to judge against any of these steps in personal growth; they are convincing while they last and rather empty once they are finished. Whatever the way stations that you experience on the path, the goal isn't the role you play; it's fulfillment within yourself.

Fulfillment is all-inclusive, which is why it is often labeled as unity consciousness. You exclude nothing from your being; there is a common thread running through you and everyone else. At that point, when empathy is effortless, you have succeeded in something that is at once very desirable and very rare. You have transcended the war between good and evil, light and darkness. Only in that state does the war end, and the perplexing issues around judgment are solved at last. Short of complete fulfillment within yourself, you cannot help but participate in duality, because the entire play of right and wrong, good and bad, light and darkness, depends upon self-division. Your ego will persist until the very end in labeling A as good and B as bad, for the simple reason that duality requires choices. As long as you prefer one thing over another, a mechanism will sneak in that says, 'If I like it, it must be good. If I don't like it, it must be bad.'

Fortunately, even as the game of judgment keeps society running smoothly, constantly dictating our likes and dislikes, our loves and hates, human beings are born to transcend. We can go beyond the setup of society, the ego and judgment itself. In that innate capacity for seeking the higher self, every hope and promise offered by the world's great spiritual teachers rests.

—[Deepak Chopra](#) is the President of the Alliance for A New Humanity.