

Value your friends, yourself: stop judging

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Yes, yes, I know it's good not to gossip, offer unsolicited advice or pick at others. And when I'm successful, withhold all judgments, I find I have little to say. Interesting. Then, when I stop picking at myself, I truly have less to say or think about. Amazing!

You might ask, "Why bother? A little gossip is fun, a little advice can help." Because I promise you, if you stop judging, you will be so much happier with your friends and yourself, that's why. Think about it. If we shred other's ideas, solve their problems or even suggest our ideas are better, we have just devalued the people we care about. We have insulted their ability to be adults and figure out what they want. And who wants friends, husbands or wives who need our constant correcting, help and wisdom? Is our need to be puffed up, feed our ego monsters, that crucial to our own self-esteem? And furthermore, why would someone want to be our friend if we haughtily need to correct or control him or her?

If we want fine friends, we need to treat them in a fine manner. The most interesting result of total acceptance is that you will end up liking others and yourself better. It's the old self-fulfilling prophecy. When we expect others and ourselves to be loveable and competent, we all become more loveable and competent. We are appreciated when we appreciate others; we are loved when we love; we are competent when we think we can be.

I'd like you to try this experiment, for just a day. We could call it World Non-Judgment Day. Just think what silencing internal judgment could do for your office or school culture, your prized relationships and your precious self-esteem. When you wake up tomorrow morning say, "Today, I will honor myself and others. No judging allowed." Then smile when you catch yourself, no criticism allowed, and continue being non-judgmental. You will make progress every new day. The next time you want to be helpful to others just say, "I trust you will figure this out." After a few days of buttoning that lip, others will notice... and appreciate it. The end result is feeling great, respected and respectful.

Now the question is, "What do I do with all this silence?" After all gossiping and judging take up huge amounts of time. Just be. Be with yourself; be with others.

- Allow your spirit to be more present in your life. After a while your self-chatter will cease. Stress will dissipate.
- Focus more on your work, hobbies and having fun.
- Walk silent in nature, but notice your senses. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you smell? What do you feel?

- Plan a family nature walk game or a treasure hunt. Children love to notice nature, where all you can talk about is what you see, hear, smell or feel. It creates smiles and family bonding.
- Write in a daily journal. Or like me, offer advice in a column!
- Start that exercise program or some other goal.

Send me an email at my web site. I'd love to hear how your Non-Judgment day, week or month goes. I'd like to give credit to Deepak Chopra's *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success* for the development of some of my non-judgmental philosophy.

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