



To judge, evaluate, and measure—these are the mind's attempts to make sense of life's vast complexity, to shape the intangible and sometimes tangible into something known. Yet, in the precision of each judgment, in the calculated measure, lies both clarity and limitation, for some truths slip past reason's grasp, too deep, too mysterious to be confined by our scales and standards. As we weigh the world around us, we must ask ourselves: do we diminish what we measure?

Chapter 7: Judging, Evaluating & Letting Go

When I used to visit a counselor for my emotional issues, I learned that one aspect of my condition had a name: passive-aggressive behavior. It sounds impressive and much like one of the paradoxical aspects of life we keep talking about. Passive and aggressive—at the same time? I learned that instead of openly confronting someone, I would express anger or frustration through subtle actions, sarcasm, or veiled comments

According to my “shrink” of yesteryear, passive-aggressive behavior allowed me to express discontent or revenge without engaging in a direct conflict, often because I wanted to avoid an argument or was uncomfortable with open confrontation. While this may seem like an example of anger, it’s about being judgmental and exploring the possible consequences. I don’t enjoy being measured, judged, or evaluated by anyone unless you have something positive about me. And yet, I do love expressing my critical perceptions of others, and I think I’m right most of the time. What’s wrong with me?



So much of our energy goes into measuring, judging, and evaluating, but does it help us? Habits like these can be draining, leaving us distracted, tired, and inadequate. Unfortunately, our lives today are fixated on comparison—appearance, achievement, and status.

What if we could let go of this constant evaluation and focus instead on living more authentically? While judgment is deeply rooted in human nature, we can find a pathway to freedom by balancing discernment with acceptance.



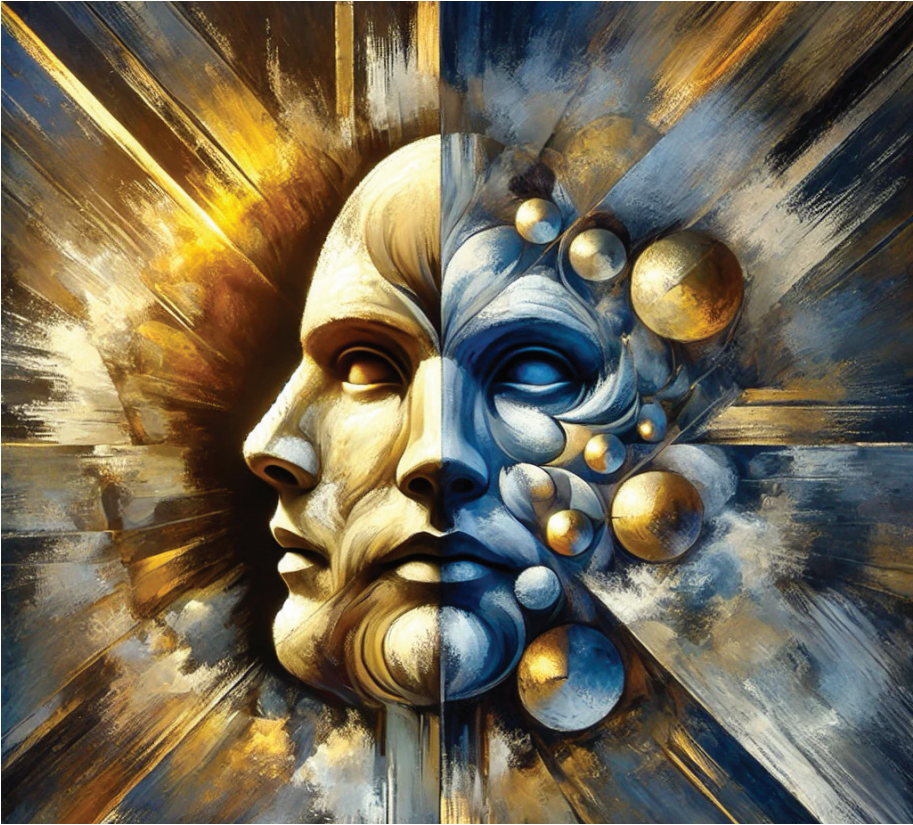
Indeed, judgment and comparison have long been essential for our survival. Our ancestors needed to assess their environment for danger, evaluate trustworthiness, and make quick judgments that often meant life or death. Physical dangers have largely diminished today, but this instinct to compare has shifted toward evaluating success, social status, and personal worth. Rather than feeling more connected, constant comparison often leaves us feeling inadequate or superior—both emotionally draining states that disconnect us from others and ourselves.

Let's get some advice from the professionals about this subject. In 1954, psychologist Leon Festinger introduced the Social Comparison Theory, which suggests that we gauge our worth and status by comparing ourselves to others. Festinger explained that when we look up to those more successful or accomplished, we might feel inadequate; when we look down on others, we might feel a temporary boost of self-worth, but it can also foster a sense of false superiority.



While comparison can sometimes inspire us to strive for growth, it often becomes a cycle that keeps us fixated on external validation and hinders our self-acceptance. Today, we know that judging others often gives us a feeling of control in an unpredictable world. By categorizing people, situations, and experiences, we feel we've created structure and gained understanding. For example, comparing our finances to

a friend's might bring brief reassurance, but soon, we find ourselves caught up in a new comparison. These judgments are often fleeting and ultimately add little real value, sometimes leaving us with more anxiety and uncertainty.



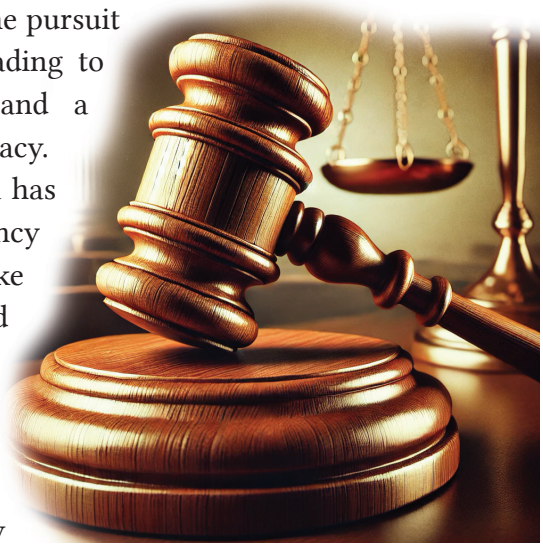
Our judgments and evaluations often stem from the ego's need to feel secure and validated. When we feel insecure, comparing ourselves to others offers temporary relief but may leave us even more anxious. We constantly judge others and evaluate ourselves, but why?

Did I do enough today? Am I good enough? This self-judgment exhausts and drains energy that could be used more meaningfully, like nurturing relationships or pursuing passions.

One of the most exhausting forms of judgment is perfectionism because it demands that we meet impossible standards and leave no room for mistakes or growth. Perfectionism is driven by a fear of being judged and failing; it is often fueled by the idea that our worth is tied

to flawless performances. The pursuit of perfection is endless, leading to burnout, disappointment, and a persistent feeling of inadequacy.

Meanwhile, social media has intensified our natural tendency to compare. Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter allow us to see the carefully curated highlights of others' lives, making it nearly impossible not to feel inadequate. I know



this firsthand—I manage around seventy-five Facebook groups, and scrolling through people's highlights every day can be overwhelming.

These curated glimpses into others' lives show only the best moments, often leaving us with a skewed perspective that traps us in a loop of comparison. The reality is that everyone has struggles, setbacks, and imperfections that remain hidden behind their social media feed. We should avoid constantly measuring ourselves against others, even subconsciously, because we can create a sense of disconnection, pushing us further from a life rooted in authenticity.

How do we break free from the cycle of judgment and comparison? By consciously shifting our attention to the present moment, we shift our focus from overthinking and comparing to engaging fully with what is happening now. By appreciating what we have, we create a sense of fulfillment rooted in contentment, freeing ourselves from the need to measure up.

Treat yourself with the same kindness and understanding you would offer a friend. Remember that no one is perfect, and you don't have to be either. By showing compassion to ourselves, we become less reliant on others' approval and find validation from within. By focusing on your unique path, reviewing where you have been and where you are headed, and correcting your course when necessary, you can find fulfillment in your personal growth.

The ancient philosophy of Yin and Yang embodies a balance between judgment and acceptance. Judgment is not inherently negative; it serves a purpose when balanced with compassion and understanding. Yin represents qualities like acceptance, reflection, and allowing things to be, while Yang embodies action, ambition, and evaluation. Knowing when to judge and when to let go conserves our energy and makes living with greater harmony and balance more possible. Believe me, letting go of judgment is liberating!

When we free ourselves from judgment, we can embrace life as it is, appreciating our experiences without attaching labels or expectations. This acceptance helps us focus less on perfection and more on presence, finding joy in simply living. It does not mean eliminating discernment or personal standards. Rather, it's about finding a balance that enables us to live with kindness toward ourselves and others.



We create a rich, meaningful, and deeply connected life by cultivating gratitude, acceptance, and authentic living. Letting go of judgment allows us to live with grace, compassion, and inner harmony, finding peace in the present moment and joy in the simple act of living.



“As I approach the end of my life, I have even less and less interest in examining what have got to be very superficial evaluations or opinions about the significance of one’s life or one’s work. I was never given to it when I was healthy, and I am less given to it now.”

– *Leonard Cohen*