

JUDGMENT

and what to do with it

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INTRODUCTION

This article is about judgment and its effect on relationship. There are few things in relationship that are more painful than out-of-control judgment. Without question, relentless judgment damages relationship, sometimes irreparably.

When we look at family systems, we usually find one or more persons in a family carries judgment while other family members are on the receiving end. These judgments can be silent or they can be overtly expressed. In any case, when allowed to continue unchecked, judgment will do its damage and relationships suffer and deteriorate accordingly.

Many people don't even know that they carry judgments. They have been judgmental for so long that they are totally identified with their judgments and consider them as a natural and necessary part of their personalities. These people don't see their judgments as separate from themselves in any way. In the early days of psychology, psychologists referred to this identification with a thought or feeling as being egosyntonic.

Conversely, some people are raised in family systems where they are judged constantly. As they move into adulthood, they are so accustomed to being judged that they don't even notice what is happening. They don't realize that they are being beaten up constantly - by other peoples' judgments and by their own internal judgments (via their inner critics and inner patriarchs). We have discussed this at great length in our book on the Inner Critic and in Sidra's book on the Inner Patriarch, The Shadow King.

THE LAWS OF THE PSYCHE

In considering the meaning of judgment in relationship, there are four fundamental psychological laws that we will be discussing in this article.

- *Law # 1: Whomever we judge or whatever we judge is an expression of one or more of our disowned selves.*
- *Law # 2: In addition to the disowned selves, underlying every judgment is an underlying vulnerability of which we are unconscious and/or unable to communicate.*
- *Law # 3: So long as these disowned selves remain in existence in the personality*

they will return to haunt us over and over again in one or more of our relationships. Relationship is the playground of the intelligence of the universe that ultimately forces us to embrace all of our selves.

- *Law # 4: As a corollary to all of the above laws, we can say that the people or things or objects or ideas that we judge or hate the most have the possibility of becoming our most important teachers once we know how to work with our judgments.*

DEFINITIONS

Before we continue our discussion of judgment we would like to present some basic definitions for those readers who are new to the work on the Psychology of Selves. For those of you who are familiar with our work, they may clarify some points or answer some of your questions.

Primary Selves

In the growing up process all of us are creatures of conditioning and the personality that we develop is a function of this conditioning. We either identify with the ideas, emotional responses and psychological training that are given to us or we rebel against them. *In the growing up process all of us are creatures of conditioning and the personality that we develop is a function of this conditioning. We either identify with the ideas, emotional responses and psychological training that are given to us or we rebel against them.* All of us are identified with our primary selves until we begin the process of separating from them. There is no escaping this reality, not for any of us. In Jungian terminology, the primary selves would determine the nature of the persona.

Disowned Selves

When we grow up in a family we identify with certain selves. This means that automatically we reject the opposite selves. Thus if a woman grows up identified with being a more giving and maternal kind of woman, then her disowned self will be the opposite energy, her more selfish and self serving interests. *Disowned selves carry our repressed psychological and emotional content.* They are the equal and opposite of our primary selves.

In Jungian terminology, the shadow would be the equivalent of the disowned selves so long as it is understood that shadow refers to repressed content that can be either "light" or "dark."

Projection

Unconscious contents in us are constantly jumping out of us and landing on other people, objects and ideas. You walk by a store that carries crystals. You see a

magnificent crystal and you feel that you must have it, that it belongs to you, no matter how expensive it may be. You are filled with all kinds of new feelings as you gaze at it. You have projected an aspect of your own spiritual nature onto it. It may be a truly beautiful crystal, but the magic that you give it is the magic of your own unrealized spiritual/ creative nature.

A very busy businessman buys a World War II Jeep and spends a fortune fixing it up. It drives terribly and is always breaking down and he has a love/hate relationship to it. What has compelled him to buy this jeep and spend a fortune trying to make it work for him? He has projected onto the jeep his disowned adventurer and his own playful child. His primary selves are the Pusher and all its allies. The Jeep is no longer a Jeep. It is, instead, a playground for the neglected playful and adventurous parts of himself that have been buried for a good many years and that he is trying to contact by owning this Jeep. The problem is that it is still a World War II Jeep and not a playground and what he yearns for continues to live in projected form, outside of himself.

A man falls in love with a spiritual woman who is a disciple of a well-known guru. He judges her constantly for her spirituality. She finally leaves and he is bereft. He yearns for her. After a few months he enters into a new relationship with a woman who is part of the same spiritual community as his first partner. He is projecting his own disowned spiritual nature onto the woman and he finds this irresistible, that is, until he begins to judge it. He will continue to do this until he is able to begin to integrate his own spiritual nature. Until then, the judgments will continue along with the intense attractions. Such projections are one of the key elements in keeping psychotherapists in business. With therapists one projects positive emotional, intellectual and spiritual contents onto the therapist in the hope that ultimately these qualities will become a part of your own nature.

Projection is akin to a bridge that reaches from us to the other person or object. We are able to walk across this bridge and once we are on the other side we find not just the other person, but we also discover, often for the first time, our very own disowned selves.

Judgment

Judgment is a reaction to someone or something that has a negative valence. When we judge, we feel that there is something wrong with the other person or thing. Judgments are connected to the autonomic nervous system and if you tune into your body, you can feel the level of emotionality that underlies the judgment. Judgments are always a function of the primary selves reacting against the threat of the disowned selves.

Discernment

Discernment is an objective evaluation of someone or something that is not based on a disowned self. There is no negative valence to the evaluation or reaction. Judgments can be transformed into discernments by the procedures described in this article.

The Ego

The ego is the term developed at the turn of the century, primarily through psychoanalytical theory. It was originally described as the executive function of the psyche, the part of us that runs the ship. What we understand now with the psychology of selves is that the ego is simply the group of primary selves that is running the personality.

When spiritual seekers talk about "getting rid of the ego," they are seeing the ego as essentially negative and they want to get rid of it because they feel it interferes with genuine spiritual development. In fact, the primary selves are very important to our well being and our ability to use power in the world. They have developed to help us to deal with life on this planet, and they do the best they can. The trick is to learn to not be identified with them. When you try to "get rid of the ego" you are in danger of becoming a victim and may lose your ability to be effective in the world.

The Aware Ego

Whenever we separate from a way of thinking or acting we are no longer identified with that particular primary self. We now have an Aware Ego in relationship to that primary self. The Aware Ego is a process that develops as we unhook from our primary selves and become aware of, and experience, our disowned selves. The Aware Ego process is always shifting and can be eliminated if a strong primary self takes over for some reason.

It is the Aware Ego process that begins to serve increasingly as a coordinating agency to regulate the different selves. In particular, it is what enables us to embrace opposites and learn to work with them in our relationships.

The Aware Ego is not Awareness but rather mediates between Awareness and the many Selves. Awareness witnesses activity but does not live life. It is the Aware Ego that keeps one foot in the world of Awareness and the other foot in the world of the Selves and thus makes proper choices for living in the world.

The Aware Ego is not the Self as used in Jungian terminology. The Self in Jungian terms refers to those elements of the psyche that are beyond the personality layer. The Aware Ego embraces the personal level on one side and the Self on the other. You cannot pin down the Aware Ego because it isn't a thing; it isn't a self. It is a coordinating mechanism that is born during the early stages of the transformational process that has the job of surrendering to, and mediating amongst, all of the selves.

The Operating Ego

As we separate from the primary self system (or primary selves) we develop the ability

to use the primary selves without being under their control. We begin to be in charge of the horses that pull the chariot instead of them being in charge of us. As this new ability develops there are still elements of the primary self system that direct our lives, usually without our knowledge. We call these continuing primary selves the "operating ego." *Thus the operating ego is the group of primary selves that continues to operate in us as our Aware Ego develops. It is grows smaller as the Aware Ego grows stronger.*

Psychological Boundaries

Psychological Boundaries refer to the ability to say "no" and "yes" appropriately. Ask yourself the basic questions: (1) "What are you doing that you don't want to do?" and (2) "What aren't you doing that you do want to do?"

If you are a responsible type of person and are always giving up your own time to help others, then you will suffer from a loss of boundaries because you are not making a real choice about what you are doing. Instead, it is the primary "Giver Self" that is making the choice for you. When we lose our boundaries, a judgmental self often emerges which judges the person we perceive as invading our boundaries. A lack of boundaries also opens us up, leaves us defenseless, and actually encourages the judgmental self of another person. Clear boundaries and real choices reduce the need for judgmental reactions.

WORKING WITH JUDGMENT

Now let us return to the four laws of the Psyche that we spoke about earlier and we will show you how to use your knowledge of these to work with - and benefit from - judgment.

Law # 1: *All Judgment is Based on Our Disowned Selves*

Whatever you judge is a disowned self! Whatever you hate is a disowned self! Whatever drives you crazy about your partner is a disowned self! On the other side, whatever you yearn for and overvalue is also a disowned self.

"My God." you might say, "My step mother was the witch from hell. Do you mean to tell me that she is my disowned self? No way am I going to try and embrace her. No way am I ever going to try and be like her. She is pure evil!" So you say and so she may be, but it doesn't change a thing. The intensity of your negative reaction lets us know with absolute clarity that your stepmother is your disowned self and that she has a very important kind of medicine that you need to complete yourself and become more completely who you are.

How does this happen? You grow up in a family system that is very painful to you. Your father remarries and his new wife is the opposite of your real mother. Your real mother is passive and loving and giving and much more easily taken advantage of. Your father

separates from her when you are quite young and your stepmother enters the picture. She is everything your real mother isn't. She is selfish, uncaring, sexual, cunning, manipulative and quite closed energetically. You push off from her and identify with your mother.

Because you are so hurt by the stepmother on so many occasions you turn off all positive feelings towards her and enter into primary allegiance to your own mother with whom you identify totally. So you become even more loving and caring person than you were before. You are wide open energetically and judge anyone who is cool, has strong boundaries, and behaves impersonally. That is, unless you fall in love with the person. You decide that you are never going to behave the way your stepmother does. Your primary selves are like your mother's and, possibly, your father's. It is your primary self system (or primary selves) that judges your stepmother. Aware Egos do not judge. Primary Selves do the judging.

Your first task is to unhook from your primary self system. This means separating from the nice self, the loving self, the serving self, the open self, and the giving self. This does not mean getting rid of these selves and becoming the wicked witch of the east. It means separating from them and learning to use them consciously and with choice.

The second step is recognizing that the wicked witch of the east is a part of you that you have buried. More accurately, it is a part of you that your primary selves have buried. In Voice Dialogue we ultimately allow these voices to speak so that you can become aware of, and experience, their absolute reality. Ultimately you will learn to use this wicked witch energy in a conscious way. The Aware Ego will then be able to spread its arms and embrace both the loving/ caring/ Christ energy on one side and the more selfish/ self-serving/ wicked witch energy on the other side.

The rewards of this are great. If you live in the light then you can only get along with people of the light. When dark energies come your way you are lost. By learning to use the stepmother's energy you gain the power to deal with darkness.

So pay attention to your judgments. Start today. Start at this moment. Write down every judgment that you have in a small pad. Once you get the hang of it you will be amazed at how much more accelerated your own consciousness process will be. Remember that we are not advocating becoming the person that you judge. We are simply asking you to be reminded of the fact that the judgments are coming from your primary selves and that you have a method here for integrating your disowned selves. Living in constant judgment, whether you are the judge or the recipient of the judgment, is like living in a body of water that is very dirty. As you step out of the world of judgment you step into ever-cleaner water. Our world desperately needs people who can step out of these murky ponds and help themselves and others move towards clarity.

Many spiritual people judge judgment and try very hard to rid themselves of it. This simply means that - for them - judgment is a disowned self. You cannot get rid of judgment by trying to act loving. All you do is drive the judgments underground where

they fester and do much damage in the shadows. Instead of trying to bury judgments, accept the spiritual task of embracing your judgments and learning how to use them as the teachers they can be.

Law # 2: *Vulnerability Lies Beneath Every Judgment*

We have seen how every judgment is based on a disowned self. In addition to this, it is also the case that with every judgment there is an underlying vulnerability. Usually this is completely unconscious. Sometimes there is an awareness of the vulnerability but you feel ashamed of it, and cannot share it with anyone else. How does this work?

John gets very angry with Mary because she is always late when they go out together. He gets more and more judgmental and angry and she gets later and later. During one of their counseling sessions, we ask John what he feels underneath his anger. Can he reach his underlying feelings? He then says a surprising thing. He says that when Mary is late he feels that things are out of control and he starts to feel a panic reaction. The same thing happens to him when the house gets messy and he judges her for not being neat. We asked him to share with Mary what this felt like and the most remarkable conversation occurred. He described his childhood home as very chaotic. His siblings were running wild and his mother was constantly overwhelmed. His father was an alcoholic who avoided taking any kind of parental responsibility and control. Everything felt out of control all the time. So John stepped in and began to try and bring order to the chaos. He started to parent his brother and sister and his mother and father as well. He did everything he could to see that things went smoothly and stayed under control.

It was clear now why he judged Mary. Hearing his vulnerability was very different to her than feeling the sting of his constant judgments. It also became clear to John that Mary was carrying his disowned selves and that he had to eventually claim the parts of him that he had to bury as a young boy.

Let's look at another example. Julie and Marie go to a party. Julie loves to flirt and flirt she does. Marie is very upset and very judgmental towards her when they get home. She tells Marie that she behaved badly and made fools of both of them.

What was the underlying vulnerability? Marie finally admitted that she was very jealous, that the flirting scared her and made her feel that she was going to be abandoned. The communication of vulnerability can do amazing things. More often than not, it brings people closer together and deepens their intimacy! And at the very least, it certainly beats judgment!! Marie's next challenge was to deal with her disowned self - a very flirtatious Aphrodite energy. Marie had disowned her flirt years before in reaction to her mother who was very attractive, very flirtatious, and who also had many extramarital adventures that had seriously disrupted the family.

In our own personal relationship, understanding our vulnerability and our disowned selves in relation to our judgments has moved our process in extraordinary ways. Sadly enough, this kind of consciousness does deprive us of that delicious feeling of

righteousness that we used to enjoy in the days when we could remain judgmental for prolonged periods of time, with each of us dancing in the "aren't I superior? dance in the "it was really **your** fault" prison. Basically we have made the following decision: Judgment feels dreadful and the faster we can get out of it, the better we both feel.

Law # 3: *Every Disowned Self Becomes One of God's Little Heat Seeking Missiles*

We first wrote these words in our book Embracing Our Selves more than 15 years ago. They were true then, and they seem even truer today. The intelligence of the universe has devised a remarkable way to force us to claim our disowned selves and relationship in it. We have seen how each of us is identified with a group of primary selves that determines who we think we are and that defines how most people see us. Whatever the primary selves that we are identified with, on the other side both equal and opposite, are the disowned selves that balance them.

In relationship we are constantly coming into contact with our disowned selves. We are either strongly attracted to them as they are embodied in someone else or we are strongly judgmental towards them or we have both reactions. The strength of our reaction is a function of the number and strength of the disowned selves involved and the strength of the underlying vulnerability that is present.

The point of all this is that there is no escaping our disowned selves. We will marry them or they will manifest in one or more of our children. We will unwittingly hire them to work for us or they will drop from the sky and appear at our doorstep. Our partners will have affairs with one of our disowned selves. We will live in the ongoing purgatory of our judgmental nature, judging others and feeling alone. Or we will be the victims of someone else's judgments. A great deal of the pain of human existence occurs because of the disowned selves and the way they operate unconsciously in our lives.

Whatever you can do to discover which selves you are identified with and which selves you disown is important. The more you can live life embracing opposites, making real choices, and setting proper boundaries, the less judgmental and self-critical you (and the others around you) will be. We cannot over-emphasize how much this is going to change the quality of your life and your relationships.

Our judgments can act as a light to lead us directly to the nature of our disowned material. So remember the basic rules. It is your primary selves that carry the judgments. The Aware Ego does not judge although it can make discernments. Remember, too, that underneath every judgment is your underlying vulnerability. This is often difficult to grasp because vulnerability is usually disowned in this culture and many of us don't even know what it looks like.

Law # 4: *The People We Judge Are the Teachers We Need*

Once we recognize that our judgments come from our primary selves and that the person we are judging is carrying our disowned selves via the mechanism of projection,

we are ready to make a remarkable discovery. We are ready to discover that the judged or hated object is the teacher we need - at this particular point in our lives - to help us to complete ourselves. We are always looking for teachers in white robes to teach us about spirituality. That is only one kind of teaching. So far as relationship is concerned, the best teachers are in your life right now at home and at work. They are the people that you can't stand, the ones that you incessantly judge and talk about. They don't usually wear magical robes but, nonetheless, they do have the medicine you need.

This is really a very shocking idea because it requires a total change in perspective. It means that rather than feel the righteousness of our own judgments we look at the other person and initially say, "Dear me, you don't mean that Slob Sam is a teacher for me! He acts like he lives in a pig pen." Once you get over your nausea and shock and possible fainting spell you are ready for the next step. "If I am so totally negative towards Slob Sam, then I must be identified with being too proper. I must have gotten rid of my own slob nature in growing up in my own family system."

Now you begin to establish connections and deepen your understanding of what is happening. You say to yourself, "I remember now how my mother was always berating my father for being a slob. I became identified with my mother and I couldn't stand my father. He was an earthy guy with no manners – very real but not educated and not proper. I can see, too, how my younger brother went the other way. He identified with my father and joined the slobs of the world."

Finally you begin to appreciate how much Slob Sam is a teacher for you. You don't need to understand the dynamics of the entire process. You just need to begin to appreciate that Slob Sam has something for you. He has a medicine that you need, he has your disowned self. As this consciousness begins to settle in, another very remarkable thing begins to happen. Your dreams begin to change. For many of you, the change in attitude towards your former enemies impacts your unconscious and new kinds of dreams begin to emerge, dreams which will help you to integrate your newfound selves, and act as your own inner teacher and guide.

IN SUMMARY

Our world is full of hatred and judgment. In many places judgment has become such a primary self that no one stops to even consider the amount of damage that is done to other people. In the political arena it has been raised to a fine art. We remember attending a meeting of the Victorian State legislature when we were in Australia and the mutual attacks of the political antagonists were absolutely wild! They looked as though they'd kill each other if given the opportunity. We hear New Yorkers judging Californians for being too loose, too free and touchy-feely while Californians judge New Yorkers for being overly rational, uptight, and concerned with appearing sophisticated. All these judgments are based on disowned selves. It is all around us and inside of us.

We carry our precious judgments for decades. We judge our fathers, our mothers, our stepparents and our stepchildren. We hate political parties and the political process,

political candidates, actors, and actresses without even realizing that we are living in constant judgment. We have gone on long enough with this unconscious worship of judgment and criticism. It is time to stop this nonsense and learn how to use judgement as a vehicle for consciousness and healing. It is time for each of us to accept this challenge, to examine all of our relationships, and to see where it is that we continue to remain stuck in the quicksand of judgment. The rewards of this work are great and well worth the effort.

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