

More Curiosity, Less Judgment Exercise

A key part of both mindfulness-based psychology and cognitive-behavioral therapy involves seeing things clearly, rather than in a more biased, limited way.

A judging mind typically obscures a broader, more realistic picture of self and others. This often leads to greater emotional suffering in the form of low self-esteem, anxiety, irritability and depression.

Thoughts of curiosity, on the other hand, impart clarity by providing a more rational view of things. This greater understanding fosters more inner peace and can also contribute to better functioning on both an emotional and interpersonal level.

Do this exercise by first identifying your judgmental thought. Then, expand these by noting a few related and more curious thoughts.

Notice how you feel and think after doing this exercise. Note: it's important to initially write down your thoughts, rather than just trying to sort them out in your head. Writing them down will provide more clarity and perspective. Once you get into the habit of doing this, then you can stop or decrease the amount of time you spending on the writing part.

Lastly, remember: constructive reflection is not a problem, but judgmental thinking is!

Example:

Judgmental Thought	Thoughts of Curiosity
I'm not smart enough to pass that exam.	Let's see what actually happens when I take the test. When do I feel the most confident in my thinking? I wonder what I'll learn from preparing for this exam?
He (or she) is just a bad person for doing that.	What circumstances would lead a person to act that way? I wonder if that was the first time it happened or one of many? Have I ever acted in that way toward somebody?
I'm terrible at sports.	I wonder why I think this? Where does this come from? Maybe I should try a different sport?

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Try spending a few minutes each day filling out parts of this chart.

Judgmental Thought	Thoughts of Curiosity