

## STEP FIVE: LET IT GO

The surprising thing about judging is that the more judgmental we are about others, the more judgmental we are about ourselves. The real reason to let things go is that we ourselves will benefit from it.

Judgment is all around us all the time. We learned it as children. We heard from parents, friends, religious leaders, and the media. Consequently we began to do it ourselves at an early age. The result of all that judging is that we have a lot of opinions; many of them may easily be based on bias that we have learned in the past but may not be valid today.

Our habit of judging is exhausting since, now more than ever, we are bombarded by the media with more things to judge. Furthermore, media concentration on negative events leaves us stressed and anxious.

Another aspect of judgment is forgiveness. People have a problem with forgiveness because they feel that if they forgive someone who did something wrong, they are letting that person off the hook. Another way to look at that is to concentrate on what it is doing for you, not what it is doing for the other person. When you let something go, you are freeing yourself from the burden of resentment that you have been carrying around with you. You have become a more compassionate person. The great benefit is not in your compassion for the person who wronged you, but in the compassion you are showing for yourself. By becoming less judgmental, you have freed yourself. It's not an easy concept to understand or to practice, but it works.

Take a look at all the people and things you are judging. Are your judgments valid? One question to ask yourself in

each case: "Is this hurting me or helping me?" If it's not helping you, you should try to drop it. Does that sound simplistic? It's really not. We are talking about your happiness. The bottom line is to let go of whatever is hurting you. It never had any value. The more negative judgments you can release, the greater your happiness and freedom will be.