

Please reflect on the feelings of judgement both your own about yourself and where else you fear it coming from. What is your history with being judged from childhood?

I got nothing but judgement from my mother when I was a child. In her eyes, I did nothing right, I was destined to be alone and a failure, to come home pregnant or graduate from college with a useless degree. I had no common sense, didn't know how to do laundry, or take a phone message, or do anything else. Of course, she never taught me how to do any of those things. And I didn't see any of this as her opinion or cruelty. At the time it was just an expression of the truth to me...pointing out my very obvious deficiencies.

My father never said anything negative about me that I can remember, but a couple of years after my parents divorced he stopped seeing me and my sister. I was told by my mother that he did that because I was too demanding. I guess you could consider his behavior a judgement as well, although for many years I have held that abandonment against my mother and not my father. Luckily, I had a grandmother who loved me and who shared my values. If not for her, I would have had no sense that I had any worth at all when I was young.

I judged myself a lot as a child. I felt different, and in my mind that meant inferior, in big and small ways. I was the kid who didn't have nice, stylish clothes or a stylish mother, who liked vanilla when everyone else it seemed liked chocolate, the kid who got motion sick on the camp bus, the last girl in my class to get a bra (I was much younger than everyone else.) I judged myself as unattractive, clumsy, and ultimately unlovable. I was never accepted by the in-crowd, although I longed to be. I had no idea how to make friends and no guidance from my parents. I thought if I looked cool enough they would accept me. I didn't realize that what I needed to do was to be friendly and care about them. I blamed myself for my lack of popularity.

I came into my marriage with very low self-esteem, although it was improving with my participation in my own addiction recovery program. Throughout the marriage, I failed to notice the constant judgement that came from my husband. It was much more subtle than the type of judgement I got from my mother, so I missed it. His judgement came in the form of disinterest in my interests and pursuits, and in expressions of surprise when I told him I was doing something that he disliked. If I challenged him, he'd say he was surprised at my choice, not critical of it. He never asked me about my involvements or interests while expecting me to be very interested in concerned about his. He acted as if my areas of knowledge were inferior to his, or he claimed to also have them when he didn't. I felt constantly judged and unworthy and didn't know why. His judgement also took the form of treating me as incompetent so I needed to depend on him. I still see that behavior from him. Recently, we decided to do a shared google doc. He asked, in a condescending manner if I needed him to show me how to do a google doc. I answered that I knew how to do that. It was typical behavior for him.

I can see how this prompt might have come from a session I had with Sue the other day, wherein I share worries I have about being judged, mostly by my older son and daughter in law, who will be visiting later this week. I don't worry that people are judging me for leaving my marriage, although I've had a couple of thoughts along those lines about my exes close friends, who I knew

for decades and with whom I no longer have contact. I'm grateful that has been the extent of it. My friends have done the opposite of judge me. They have all been totally encouraging and supportive. I don't feel judged for living alone and not having a partner, not even with couple friends.

My worries center around the concern that my children will judge how I live, compare it to how my ex lives, and prefer his life. He is messy and disorganized, and so are they. I am neat and orderly and yes, controlled. He has a dog and now a new live in partner. My fear is that they will prefer the chaotic life in my ex's household and will find my quiet life empty and pitiable. Of course, the bottom line fear is that I will lose them.

I still judge myself all too often. In terms of my betrayal trauma and divorce, I judge myself and my behavior throughout the marriage and now: For not getting over him more quickly and easily, for letting him still get to me, for not letting myself see what he was really like for all of those years and leaving the marriage way sooner. For picking him in the first place. For all the ways I sold myself out. On the other hand, when I read things like what Karen wrote the other day, I can go to judging myself for not hanging in and helping him recover (although I tried doing that unsuccessfully for many years.)

I am taking lots of risks and doing new things, but I can still judge myself at the times when I just can't...can't reach out, can't sit through the pain instead of medicating it just a little bit with mindless TV (that is the only escape I allow myself...I don't overeat, take drugs, drink, smoke. I live a ridiculously pure life in those ways, and I believe I should turn to God or people in the collective when I'm in emotional pain, or learn to process it and be with myself.) Sometimes I can judge myself for being human and imperfect.

I judge myself for being afraid, for still wanting someone to take care of me and to lean on, though I am painfully aware of where that got me. I judge myself when I'm indecisive or don't know how to handle something and don't know where to go for assistance. A lot of my self-judgement comes out in shoulding on myself.

I can relate to the video...I can judge myself for both sides...doing too much or too little, being too controlled or too loose, etc.

I don't feel responsible for my ex's addictions or mental illness and I don't judge myself for his behavior in any way. But, I can still judge myself for my response to it...my continuing to get annoyed at his lack of empathy and sensitivity, my inability to accept that he is who he is, my continual surprise when he acts the same ways over and over. That characterized my marriage as well. I seem to never get the lesson, always expecting him to be different. I judge myself for that.

To top it all off, I am judging myself now for how much I judge myself at times. I want to soften it and say that I am practicing self-love and self-compassion. That I work hard to be nice and kind to myself. Those things are true as well, but they are still somewhat of an overlay. My go to is still mostly the judgement of myself. Hopefully, I'll get more accepting and loving towards myself over time and with practice. I hope so.