

The Things I Judge

**An Eight-Week Practice for Softening
the Judgments You Carry**



THE INNER LISTENER

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Noticing what a long-held judgment has actually been protecting can sometimes bring up stronger feelings than expected, especially in Week 6. If that happens, pause the practice and speak with a qualified professional. There is no benefit to pushing through discomfort here, and the journal can always be picked back up later.

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Welcome

Judgment moves fast and mostly stays private. A verdict about someone else's choice, their pace, their tone, forms before you have even finished noticing it happened. This journal is not asking you to stop judging, that is unlikely to work for anyone. It is asking you to notice what is actually underneath the judgment before deciding what to do with it.

The practice rests on a simple idea: most judgments are not really about the other person at all. Underneath, there is usually a fear, an unmet need, a value being protected, or a belief absorbed long ago and never questioned since. Once that root becomes visible, the original judgment tends to lose some of its grip, whether or not anything about the other person actually changes.

What will it look like? Eight weeks, each built around a different way judgment shows up, voiced silently, driven by fear, by an unmet need, by a value, by an unquestioned belief, turned inward, aimed at the same few people again and again, and finally, ready to be released. One page a day, a quick tick for where the energy seems to be coming from, and a short look-back every six days, so the pattern shows itself across the whole practice rather than one day at a time.

By the last page, you will not simply have judged less. You will have a written, specific record of what your own judgments have actually been protecting, and at least a few you are ready to release outright. Miss a day or two within a week, and nothing beyond that week is affected. Each week stands on its own, waiting for you to pick it back up.

WORTH ASKING

Why Journal This?

Naming what is underneath a judgment rarely happens by accident. Writing it down does. It is one thing to feel, vaguely, that a person or a decision annoys you. It is another thing to trace that reaction to an actual fear, need, value, or belief, and see it sitting there on the page instead of only in the reaction itself.

The Stoic philosopher **Epictetus** wrote, “People are not disturbed by things, but by the opinions about the things.” Most of what this journal asks you to do is look directly at the opinion, a few lines at a time, rather than only at the thing it is aimed at.

Anaïs Nin put it more simply: “We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are.” A judgment usually says as much about what the person making it is protecting as it does about whoever it lands on.

This is a private practice, not a performance. Nobody is reading over your shoulder, and nothing here needs to sound generous, fair, or enlightened. The only job of this page is to be honest about what is actually underneath the verdict and then let the day close.

WORTH KNOWING

The Shape of This Practice

The Judgment

The quick verdict about someone, including yourself, that arrives before its actual root is visible.

The Root

The fear, unmet need, value, or belief the judgment is quietly built on, once the verdict itself is set aside.

The Release

Naming the root honestly, then choosing to spend your energy on your own life rather than continuing to carry the verdict.

HOW TO USE THIS JOURNAL

The Daily Rhythm

I Noticed. Name one judgment you noticed yourself making today, about someone else, or about yourself.

Where the Energy Is Coming From. Tick whichever of the four feels closest, a fear, an unmet need, a value, or a belief you were taught. First instinct is usually the right one, no need to overthink it.

A Kinder, Lighter Read. Rewrite the same moment in one sentence, describing only what actually happened, without the verdict attached.

Then read the closing line and let the day be done. Some days the root will be obvious. Other days it will take a moment to find, and either answer is a good one. If a prompt brings up more than a line or two can hold, it is fine to write only part of it, skip it, or come back another day, and a trusted person or a professional is a better place for anything heavier than a page can carry.

Three Small Things to Remember:

Protect your privacy: You never need to write full names. Initials, a nickname, or simply "someone from work" hold just as much truth as a real name.

Keep it light: Some moments bring up more than a few lines can hold. If that happens, it is completely fine to write only part of it, skip a day, or come back later.

Know your limits: A journal is a quiet space for awareness, but a trusted person or a professional is always a better place for anything heavier than a page is meant to carry.

Stuck Naming It?

Some days the judgment is obvious the moment it happens. Other days it takes a moment to catch, and that blank space is usually where the practice stalls. If nothing comes to mind, borrow a word below, or use it to point toward your own.

Judgments I make of others

Lazy / Selfish / Too much / Not enough / Materialistic /
Careless / Rude / Biased / Dramatic.

Judgments I make of myself

Behind / Not disciplined enough / Failing / Too sensitive /
Negative / Should know better by now / Unlucky.

Fears that often hide underneath

Being taken advantage of / Losing control / Being
disrespected / Being left behind / Being seen as weak.
Beliefs I was taught, without questioning / Rest has to be
earned / Money is hard to keep / Strong people do not ask
for help / Being late is disrespectful / Feelings should be
managed quietly / Worthiness.

None of these need to be exact. Naming the shape of
today's judgment, and its likely root, is usually enough to
start loosening it.

Signs a Judgment Is Doing the Talking

A judgment rarely announces itself as one. More often, it shows up like this instead.

A fear talking

Assuming the worst about someone's motives / Feeling unusually defensive over a small comment / Needing to be right more than the moment calls for.

An unmet need talking

Resenting someone else's ease, rest, or freedom / Feeling irritated by praise given to someone other than you / Noticing envy dressed up as criticism.

A value talking

Feeling strongly certain someone is simply wrong / Struggling to see any reasonable version of their choice / Reacting more strongly than the situation seems to warrant.

A belief talking

Assuming there is only one correct way to do something ordinary / Being surprised, even offended, that someone lives differently / Catching yourself thinking "that is just how it is done" without knowing why.

None of these are a failure. They are simply worth noticing, the same way this journal asks you to notice everything else.

BEFORE DAY ONE

A Simple Way to Set It Down

Most judgments noticed in this journal did not start today.

The fear, the unmet need, the value, or the belief underneath usually formed much earlier, often as a way of staying safe or making sense of the world at the time. This journal is not trying to unpack that in depth, and it does not need to, for this practice to work.

What it does need is a small, repeatable way to close each day's noticing, so the judgment does not simply harden into fact. The tool is deliberately tiny: tick the root that feels closest, read the closing line, and let the page close for the night.

This is not about becoming a person who never judges again. It is about catching the verdict a little sooner each time, naming what it is protecting, and choosing, on purpose, where your energy actually goes. Use it at the end of every daily page, whichever root gets ticked.

If something surfaces that feels heavier than a tick and a sentence can hold, a trusted person or a professional is a better place for it than this page.

How This Works

This journal does not ask you to stop judging. Instead, once a day, for eight weeks, it asks you to notice one judgment and trace it back to one of four places it usually comes from: a fear, an unmet need, a value, or a belief you were taught.

Each week opens with a different angle on the same four roots, voiced silently, driven by fear, by an unmet need, by a value, by an unquestioned belief, turned inward, aimed at the same few people again and again, and finally, ready to be released. Six days of noticing, then a short review to see honestly what showed up.

The tick-menu is a first instinct, not a diagnosis. Whichever of the four feels closest in the moment is the right answer for that day. It does not need to be correct in any deeper sense, only honest enough to be useful.

From there, the practice repeats, the same size and the same shape, every single week, until tracing a judgment back to its root starts to happen without a page prompting it.