

STOP HIDING AND START LIVING!

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

**A GUIDE TO LETTING GO
of a Past that's Holding You Back**

...

DOUG DANE

C H A P T E R

0 1

Stop Judging

Judging a person does not define who they are. It defines who you are.

—Unknown

WHEN YOU STOP judging others, you'll stop judging yourself.

When we are born, we are authentic and filled with love, without judgment. But very early on, we learn to judge. It starts small, and it grows. It grew in you, and it grew in the ones around you who raised you and taught you.

We watched our parents judge people. They criticized the neighbors. They criticized their friends, talking behind people's backs. They criticized each

other. And when they raised us, they criticized us. They didn't mean to, but they did.

They told us what was right and wrong and defined what was good and bad. If we got it right, we got praise, love, validation, and approval. But if we got it wrong, then we were judged, criticized, punished, yelled at, ignored, and in my case, hit.

Self-doubt grew within us and we began to judge ourselves. Then we started judging others. We punished ourselves when we didn't measure up, and we looked for validation from others to confirm we were doing things right.

This created our fear of criticism, and we began to worry about what others thought about us. We don't like what we think of ourselves, and we're afraid of what other people think of us. And most of us aren't even aware of it. This fear is further fueled by social media, politics, through fashion and style, and through television and magazines. It's everywhere!

We learned to cover up how we felt or what we thought because we didn't want to be judged. We learned to cover up who we really were, and we fell into line. Then we started to dislike ourselves, maybe even hate ourselves, and we didn't want anyone to know what we thought of ourselves. What would they think of us if they really knew what we were thinking and feeling?

JUDGMENT IS A PANDEMIC, AND IT'S SPREADING.

As an adult and a parent, I see how the cycle is continuing. Many adults are struggling with judgment and the fear of criticism, and they are raising children who are struggling. The parents are struggling to help their struggling children, and they don't know what to do!

Letting go of your past and how you view it is the cure.

I really struggled and got stuck a lot! I judged myself. Who wouldn't? I can imagine how you must feel about yourself. You will see stories throughout this book that you may relate to. Don't judge yourself if you do.

Judgment and fear of criticism causes you to worry. When you worry, it creates anxiety, which leads to depression and maybe worse. Anxiety and depression seem to be the new norm. It seems no one knows what to do. Pills and counseling have become the go-to remedies, but they aren't the cure. Mental health awareness is a popular narrative these days, but it just brings attention to the problem, not the cure. We are treating symptoms, not the cause. Judgment is the cause! Letting go of your past and how you view it is the cure. Learning to

like yourself, forgiving yourself, and ridding yourself of worrying about what others think is the cure!

If you realize why you were judged, and you understand why you judge yourself, you can let it go and be free. I'll explain this as we go through this book together.

As a parent, I realized it's not my job to pass along my rules, values, and beliefs that set me up to judge. I'm supposed to rid myself of judgment, so I don't pass it along to my daughter or others in my life. We all run the risk of judging our children and spreading the disease. I still judge other people sometimes. But the difference now is that I catch myself doing it. And when I do catch myself, I stop it, and I remind myself to look for the good in others. For me to see the good in someone else, I must see good in me.

I discovered a cure for self-judgment and fear of criticism. It's a three-step process. The first step is to stop judging others. The second naturally follows: when you stop judging others, you stop judging yourself (or you start judging yourself less), and you feel better about yourself; you become lighter. Third is you become immune to other people's judgment of you. When I became more immune to judgment, the *disease* began to ease. When I started treating people better, I started treating myself better. That made me feel free.

It's that simple. Make these steps a habit, and when you do, you'll find that you judge yourself less.

Be careful what you send out because it will come back and hit you in the back of your head. It's called

the boomerang effect. As I started to direct more love and acceptance towards others, more love and acceptance came back to me.

When we judge others, it's a reflection of how we feel about ourselves. I discovered there is good in me! The judgments I've made over the years created a *disease* in me that had impacted so many areas of my life. I have now forgiven myself, and I've forgiven those who have hurt me out of their own hurt, judgment, and fear.

**When you stop judging others, you
stop judging yourself.**

I was surprised how simple it was and how quickly things changed for me.

My mission is to help rid others of judgment. If I can get adults to stop judging themselves and others, then they can be freer, and the people they judge will be freer. Then they can free their children from judgment, and they can raise them to be healthier and happier. Their children can grow up to be adults who are healthy and happy and raise children who are also healthy and happy. I figure it'll only take one or two generations to help to reduce enough judgment to create a better world.

■ MEDITATION ■

Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Matthew 7:1-2 NIV

■ INSIGHTS ■

What did you learn from this chapter?

1.

2.

3.

■ ACTION ■

Your first step is to stop judging.

- Make a list of things you judge yourself for.
- Pick one thing from your list; decide you're going to practice letting go of it each day.
- Make a list of the people in your life whom you judge. Pick one person and decide that you are no longer going to judge them, and practice, starting today.

As you practice this first step, pay attention to what you say and think to yourself about others and correct yourself. Look for the good in people. Treat others the way you want to be treated.