

Nonjudgmental Thinking in DBT

Nonjudgmental thinking is one of the cornerstones of DBT. Marsha Linehan said that nonjudgmental thinking is one of the hardest skills to adapt and integrate into our thinking because the human brain has a negative bias and it is always looking for what is dangerous or wrong in our environment. It doesn't come naturally to us, and if we consider the environments and culture in which we grew up, that often compounds our struggle with judging our emotions, thoughts and actions negatively. We have the ability to change this and it means we have to work at it to challenge our negative judgments about ourselves and others.

Two Types of Judgments

Discriminate Judgment: to discern or analyze whether something meets some type of standard or whether **something fits the facts**.

Examples:

- Discerning whether it is safe to cross the street
- Judges discern whether an action is against the law.
- You might discern which fruit at the grocery store looks the freshest.
- After looking at your checking account, you discern how much you can spend at the quilt shop.

Evaluative Judgment: to judge something based on **opinions, personal values** or **labeling** (good/bad, right/wrong, ugly/pretty).

Examples:

- She is wearing a beautiful blouse.
- He is a handsome guy.
- That driver who cut me off is a jerk!
- You are unfair.
- That waiter was useless.

Judgments that evaluate as good or bad are in the mind of the observer. They are not qualities of what the observer is judging. Evaluations are often shortcuts or describing consequences.

Example:

- The milk has gone bad. (shortcut)
- The milk smells sour and if we drink it we might get sick. (facts and consequences)

Why does DBT place so much importance on learning to notice evaluative judgments and to reframe them nonjudgmentally?

- Judgments can have damaging effects on us and our relationships.
- Judgments can have negative effects on emotions – can keep negative emotions going.
- Judgments can be an excuse for not changing things that can be changed.
- Nonjudgmental thinking is fundamental to mindfulness.

Nonjudgmental does NOT mean:

- Approval
- Denying consequences
- Keeping quiet about preferences or desires

Also remember:

- Values and emotional responses to events are not themselves judgmental.
- Statements of fact are not judgmental, but judgments often go along with the statements of fact.

*****Golden Rule of Nonjudgmental Thinking: DON'T JUDGE YOUR JUDGING!!**

HOW DO WE RECOGNIZE JUDGMENTAL THINKING?

Let go of Good and Bad: Describe "what is."

Instead of: "Phil is a real jerk and is a bad co-worker."

Reframe to: "Phil talked over two co-workers in the meeting and told Sue he didn't want to hear her opinion."

Replace evaluations with simple statements of "it is," or with descriptions of what is.

Instead of: "This is a great pillow."

Reframe to: "I like this pillow." OR "I like this pillow because it has a curve that supports my neck."

Let go of "Should" and Should Not."

Instead of: (1) "I shouldn't be so emotional" (2) "Everyone should get paid sick leave."

Reframe to: (1) "I wish I didn't cry so easily." (2) "I think it is unfair that some people don't get sick leave."

You might be thinking Judgmentally if you are using words/phrases such as:

GOOD	BAD	RIGHT	WRONG	SHOULD	SHOULDN'T
ALWAYS	NEVER	I NEED YOU TO . . .	YOU NEED TO . . .		

OK! LET'S PRACTICE!!!

Decide whether each statement is Judgmental or Nonjudgmental by placing a **J** or an **N** in front of the statement. If the statement is judgmental, write a nonjudgmental version. (Feel free to add your own facts or consequences if needed.)

_____ I'm such an idiot for forgetting to wish my husband Happy Valentine's Day!

_____ I can't believe you forgot to pick up the kids! You really need to clean up your act.

_____ I wish I didn't feel so incompetent at my new job.

_____ Valentine's Day should not be a holiday.

_____ I feel frustrated when you don't do chores that you promised to do.

_____ You never listen when I tell you my schedule for the week.

_____ You are such a wonderful friend!

_____ I always have to be the one to discipline the kids.

_____ All politicians are corrupt.

_____ I really appreciate your willingness to take this class

What are some of your "favorite" judgments? See if you can reframe them nonjudgmentally.

*****A New Mantra for You to Try: "I will not Should on myself."*****

**I will not SHOULD
on myself!**



**I will not SHOULD
on myself!**



Wallet-size!