

SAFETY

Judgment closes people up and shuts them down. When people feel judged they usually want to defend themselves and maybe even go on the attack. Why? Because they feel unsafe.

Stop judging others, and you will not be judged.

Matthew 7:1

Much better things tend to happen when we suspend judgment (on both ourselves and others) and replace it with a genuine interest in the other person.

People usually act and feel the way they do for good reasons.

Compassion and understanding create a tremendous amount of safety. When a person refuses to judge my motives and instead tries to understand why I did some foolish or hurtful things, that person's compassion encourages me to open up--and our relationship grows.

Judgment results in defensiveness and closes down relationships, while curiosity results in openness and safety, giving life to relationships. When we express our interest in someone, something energizing occurs. Have you ever met people who are awesome listeners? They seem fascinated with everything you say. They hang on every word. They ask good questions and clearly express an interest in getting to know you. You almost can't help but walk away from people like that without thinking, Gosh, I really like them! I felt so cared for. They seemed so interested in me. You might not even remember the people's names, but you've already decided they are great. Why? Just because they seemed curious and interested in you.

Judgment writes people off, bangs the gavel, and sentences them to a year of isolation from you. That kind of judgment shuts off discovery. It's as if you've already heard everything you need to hear in order to render your verdict: "That's it. You're finished."