



When we think about judgments, we often think about them in terms of negative judgments about someone or even positive ones. There are of course, judgments for fine-tuning something, judgments of the court, "Judgment Day", etc. All of these use a single foundation: "This Not That". Although we may at times think of judgments as being "for" something, that something is always the opposite of something else. It is worth noting that, integral to that mental process, is judging against something or someone...always. That we tend to focus on our goal of using judgment to make things better notwithstanding, we spend much of our time mentally "judging against".

A lot of this mental process is automated, and its criteria arbitrary. Since we base our judgment decisions on predetermined criteria of right and wrong, better and worse, etc., we take it for granted that our judgments are sound and founded in something fairly solid. And from a human viewpoint (or at least some of them), we might be correct. We usually give little or no thought to the variable aspect of our judgment criteria over time. The way we view things today, very likely is not the same as how we viewed them years ago, if indeed we thought about them at all. People a generation or two, or perhaps a century or two ago, would have thought about them even more differently.

Whether in the heat of a quick and sudden judgment, or in the overall trend of judgment over time, our judgments and our criteria for them change. Our views change in terms of individual views, of national or local collective views, and of the average global community views. We might find it difficult to come up with an accurate description of such views, because they vary from person to person and group to group. Nevertheless, it is clear that these do change. So today's views of "this not that" may be far afield from what yesterday's views of "this not that" were, whether it be social mores, science, religion or personal relationships and their guiding criteria.

As long as we live in the world perceived as in motion through time, judgments and the choices involved in their formation will continue, and be unavoidable. Since criteria and judgments change, and since both individual and global quality of life depend on the choices made, it makes sense to give some attention to discovering better criteria for making better and more lastingly beneficial choices.

The short answer is relaxing our tight grip on the beliefs we hold dear, along with making our minds more open to allowing change. The next question then, is of course, to just what should we open our minds? We always want to answer such a question, but unfortunately we tend to accept only answers that fit the beliefs we already hold dear. Additionally, we believe that, in order for the answer to a question of such importance to have value, it must first be clearly defined. Why? Because without intellectually graspable definition, we can't compare and contrast it to what we already believe. Another way of saying that is that we do not want to relinquish our hold on the beliefs we have, because we view them as supporting not only our quality of life, but our survival as well. Although there is some truth to that view of our beliefs, it is also true that those same beliefs are part of a global matrix of beliefs, swirling in the minds of all, and the judgment-based behaviors of those beliefs bring not only quality of life and some degree of survival, but also disparity, poverty, sickness, pain, untimely death, war and many other things.

Consider that, although our beliefs and their underlying criteria change, and although the world around us changes...there is reality within and around us that does not change. Everything we see, from stars and planets to animals and people, to molecules and subatomic particles...changes. But these all effect their apparent change within a steady framework so to speak. Things that change sometimes spiral out of control. Relationships may explode, planets may collide, or the stock market may fail to behave as expected. But what of this non-changing reality? We don't see it...we see people, rocks and things. Although that seems to be the case, we actually do see reality...and it is the people, rocks and things that we do not see, but instead perceive. What we "see" is whatever it is that is real and is actually there (*regardless of our perceptions*), and in this case, "real" means that which is faithful to our vision because it never changes. We are so accustomed to perceiving people, rocks and things, that we don't often notice reality. Our memorized belief system tells us that, "real" is whatever presents itself to us as images our eyes can feast upon, our ears can relish, and our hands can touch, kick a tire here and there, and by these presents, "determine" the reality of them.

Another way of saying that is that we use judgment to determine a belief about what is real, substituting that belief and its supporting perceptual evidence for actually seeing the only reality there is, which reality requires no such judgments

*Doug Couch - 2018*