

## Transforming Judgements

*Every criticism, judgment, diagnosis, and expression of anger is the tragic expression of an unmet need. — Marshall Rosenberg*



In many ways, the capacity to judge has helped human beings to meet their needs for protection and efficiency. And yet, when it comes to the interpersonal domain, the act of judging has more often than not only led to an enhanced sense of separation and pain for all the parties involved. The very act of judging tends to put ourselves on a higher pedestal and judge the other party (student/colleague) as being inherently wrong. While it may help us have a sense of self-righteousness, it not only creates distance between people but it also disconnects us from our own needs.

The intention of this module is not to ask you to give up your judgements but rather the intention is to invite you to **embrace your judgements and become curious about them**. Our judgements are merely an indication that some of our needs are not being met. There are 2 key steps that can help us to transform our judgements and move back into a space of connection:

- 1) Identify your feelings towards this other person and recognizing/connecting with the needs that you are trying to meet by judging this other person
- 2) Making a guess about what the other person could probably be feeling and imagining/ connecting to the needs that the person is trying to meet by those actions.

Since we are socialized to judge others and engage in right vs wrong thinking, many people may find this activity very challenging, especially in the initial phases. Changing our habitual ways of engaging with the world can seem to be a herculean task. Therefore, the challenge is to engage in regular practice because transforming our judgements not only transforms our quality of life but it also transforms us as human beings.

## Exercise

1. Write down a judgment that you would like to explore about someone - your student, colleague or someone who is in a position of authority in your school. This may be something you believe to be completely true about the other person. For example: "He is an idiot", "She is manipulative", "She is a difficult student", "He is attention seeking", "He is political and plays dirty games", "He is rude".
2. Write down your observations about this person that make you have this judgement about them. For example: "5 times in last week, when I turned my back towards the board, he started making some sounds and the whole class started laughing", "We had worked together on the project but she went and told the head teacher that it was all her effort", "He was looking outside the window when I was teaching and when I asked him to pay attention, he said that there was no point in paying attention as he wouldn't understand what I am teaching any which ways".
3. How do you feel towards this person? What needs of yours are not met in relation to that person's action?
4. Try to put yourself in this other person's shoes. What needs do you imagine this person might be trying to meet by taking this action? How might this person be feeling?
5. Check in with yourself about your original judgment. Is it still alive? If yes, return to connecting with your own needs or with the other person's needs – wherever you're experiencing more energy and tension. If the judgment is still alive after that, consider: What needs might you be trying to meet by holding on to this judgment? What feelings arise in relation to this? Again, connect with yourself sufficiently about these needs to experience some relief.
6. Check in with yourself again about the judgment. If it's still alive, consider the following question: Is there any way in which you believe the judgment to be "the truth"? If so, explore what needs might be met by this belief, and what needs might be met by letting go of this belief.
7. Reflect on your feelings, needs, and any requests you have of yourself or of the other person in this moment.