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NEWSLETTER
JULY 2009

AUTHORS' NOTE



If you live in the northern hemisphere, then June 21 marked the 'longest day of the year'. It also meant that the year is about half over, and time remaining in 2009 to complete your goals is becoming shorter.

Making judgements of others and, in turn, fearing being judged myself has driven the subjects of several newsletters. When I committed to giving up making judgements, I found that I had learned the behavior at a very young age, as do most of us. I also learned how the judgement I thought others made of me had some power over the choices I made. Now that I am aware of the role judgement (both making & receiving) plays in my life, it is time to explore its source, which is the subject of this month's newsletter.

Until next month.....Lin

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This is one of the articles in a series that will explore different types of fear, their formation, their affect in our lives, and how to diminish or eliminate their presence.

Understanding the Source of the Fear of Judgement

We are trained from a young age to look for the judgement of others. The training can be inadvertent or overt. It comes from parents, teachers, friends, peers, and the media. *Don't bite your nails. Don't wear plaid with stripes. Put your napkin in your lap. Don't stare at people. Only certain name brand clothing makes you cool. You need a cell phone.* The examples are endless, but they imprint the belief that it is necessary to receive approval from others.

We are usually not very old when our "training" begins. Parents and others who participate in raising us teach us about acceptable behavior by judging our actions and then giving us feedback. Even before we are able to talk we are given feedback on our behavior, such as the loud "no" we hear when we engage in unwanted behavior. Behaviors our teachers want us to continue are praised and positively rewarded. Actions they wish eliminated are met with scolding, displeasure and maybe even corporal punishment.

When we are small we seek approval from our parents and teachers and so strive to conform to their



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beliefs and expectations so we can be judged as fitting them and, therefore, be accepted. As we get older the acceptance of our peers and friends becomes more important and we are then influenced by their judgements. If our personality is such that it responds to positive rewards, then the the behavior and beliefs our parents want us to have get set in place. If instead our personality is of a rebellious nature, then we learn to reject positive reinforcement and behave in ways that elicit negative rewards. Regardless of our peronality, we learn that our behaviors and actions are judged as good or bad.

As we mature we learn that everyone does not share the same values, beliefs and judgements. Behavior that is unacceptable to some people is found to be tolerated well by others. In other words, we learn that different people can and do make different judgements of the same behavior. We also form bonds with some individuals and, therefore, respect and desire their acceptance more than someone with whom we do not share a connection. Generally, we are more concerned about how those with whom we have attachments judge us and our choices than we are about people with whom we have little to no connection. To make matters worse, we allow what we *think* we know -- not what we actually know -- others are thinking about us to control our actions. Much of the time we imagine the worst and may even perceive that we are being judged in a negative way. Our perception becomes our reality, and we act or react on what we have imagined. When we think we are being judged poorly or fear that our actions may draw a negative response, we often let the fear control our choices, actions and/or reactions. It is unfortunate that this can happen even if what we have imagined is not accurate or true! In other words our fear of what might happen is in control of our decisions.

Fear of how we will be judged, whether true or false, rational or irrational, can play a major role in how we behave. Even if we think we are being judged in a positive light, we have been trained from the time we are very young to consider the judgement of others when deciding how to behave. In addition, the importance of their judgements to us and their influence on our behavior is directly related to our level of self-confidence. In general, the more confident we are in ourselves, the less we are concerned about being judged poorly. Yes, we may still desire to be judged postitively, but when we are confident in ourselves and our abilities, we are better able to weather unfavorable judgements and not let them unduly influence us.

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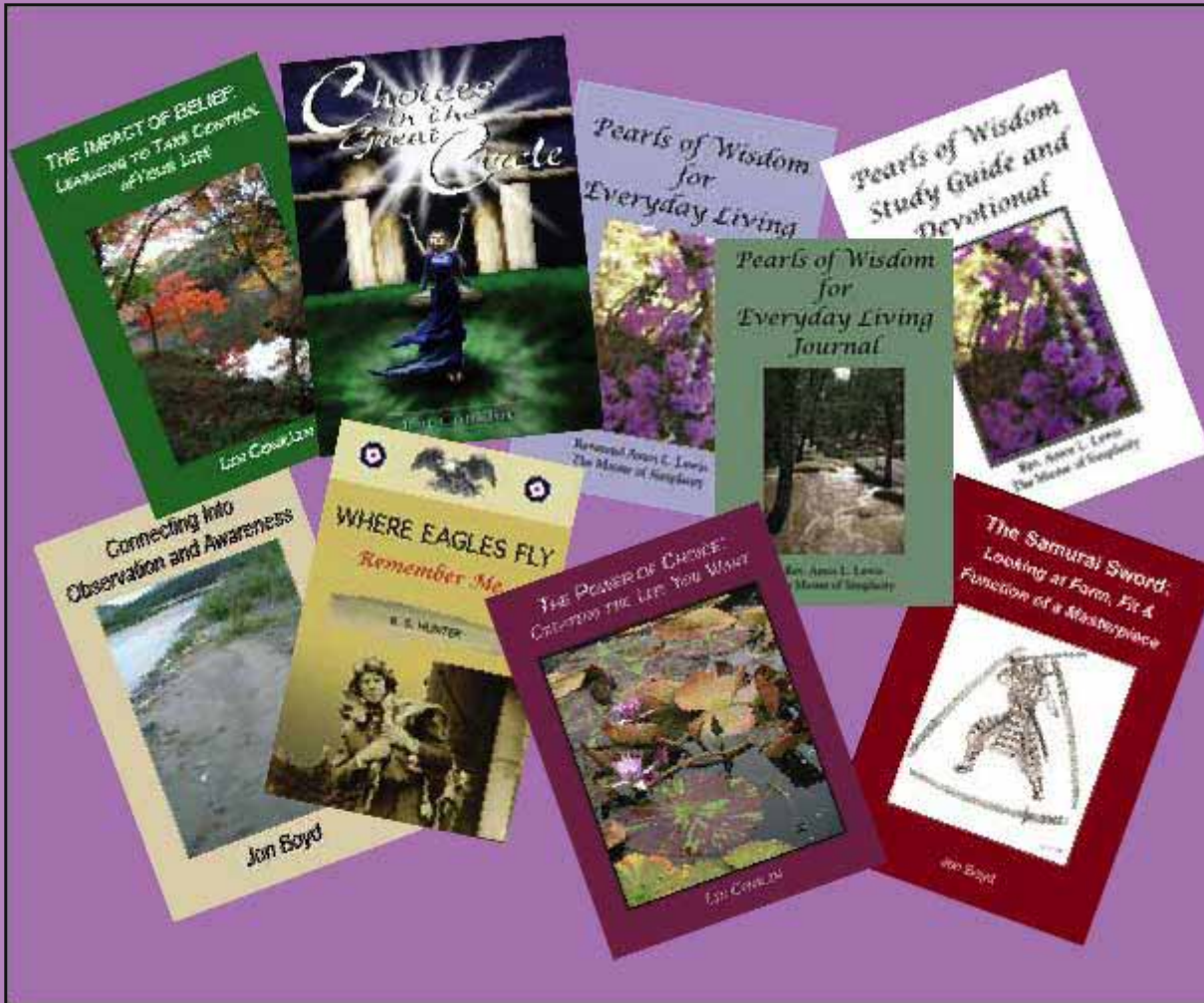


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