

Use Judgment Judiciously

Man cannot live on earth without constantly interpreting his environment. Each interpretation is an act of judgment. Like it or not, you are always applying your judgment to everything you are aware of. When you embrace this fact, you can hone your judgment and master its influence.

The hallmark of true adulthood is displaying enough self-awareness to take responsibility for your life. That is when you can effectively wield judgment over your actions. With practice, you will develop confidence in your standards for how things ought to be. You will learn through practice and error the meaning of right and wrong. Though your knowledge will never be perfect, you will understand that it is sometimes necessary to take bold actions and calculated risks on perpetually imperfect data.

Judgment, however, is a double-edged sword. Whenever you ascribe meaning to something, you open yourself to retaliation as other people interpret your interpretations. Judgment builds upon judgment, creating a potential maelstrom of confused meanings and negative reactions to imaginary things. For this reason, much of the world will tell you not to wield your judgment. They fear their power because they have no acquired mastery over themselves. They long ago lost confidence in their learning abilities, so they outsource the truth to socially acceptable authorities.

Exceptional people know when to apply their judgment and when to seek aid with their weaknesses. Learning this discretion is crucial for your personal happiness and impact upon the world. Just as you cannot forego judging, you must also avoid the temptation to see your judgment as infallible. Your judgment must appeal to something greater than your momentary emotional whims or the biases you have inherited from your past. Navigate backward in pathways of your mind to see where your conclusions originated. What premises shape your current evaluations? If any were to change suddenly, what would it mean for the remainder of the thought architecture resting atop it? Deep inquiry is necessary if you are to hone this vital skill.

Taking responsibility for the way you wield your judgment also means taking responsibility for the times that you fail. None of us are perfect in how we execute the ideas we have about how things will work. It's one thing to act in the best manner you can with the information available. It's quite another to overlook a factor which proper care should have your attention to. When you involve other people in your judgment, and the actions derived thereof, you have a moral obligation to create recourse for the damages your oversights may cause. Restitution is the price the exceptional person pays to maintain his moral standing among his clan. Taking accountability for how you impact other lives is the only way to take full accountability for your life.

If you ever aspire to the large goals you seek for yourself, you will have to work your way into the upper echelons of judgment one rung at a time. Begin now by taking responsibility for the areas of your life in which you feel you lack control. Take on a task and see it through to its completion, no matter how insignificant it seems. The failure to take complete dominion over mediocre things is the primary reason ordinary people will never apply their undeveloped judgment to anything worthwhile.

Use your judgment as a weapon against chaos. Separate in your mind the things that belong from those that do not. Exert your preference for the way things should be. Discretion is the genesis of all art and all creation. You learn to segregate reality into forms that please you. Then they can serve the larger purpose that you prescribe for them.