

Beyond Cognitive Behavioral Therapy: The Power of Imagery in Psychotherapy

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OVERVIEW

The *Judge* is that part of our personality that judges and criticizes whatever we do. The *Judge* exercises psychological power and control by terrorizing our *inner child* causing us much pain, anguish, low self-esteem, anxiety and depression. One of the main functions of the *Judge* is to block us in growth and development towards realizing our true potential. We all have an inner *Judge* component in our personality. The development of the *Judge* is inherent to our human nature and the manner in which our minds and body are connected by means of the stress response. Even though we all have a *Judge*, we can learn to become aware of its presence and reduce its power and control over our lives. It gains control by terrorizing our *inner child* outside our awareness. We can also learn to become aware of the many ploys of the *Judge* to take control of our lives and to thwart us in our attempts to live our lives to the fullest.

The *Judge* is often found to be active in the development of physical dis-ease and physical pain as well as emotional pain. It is important for therapists to recognize the *Judge* in their clients and to learn how to reduce its psychological power as a vital part of the therapy process. It is also important for us as therapists to recognize our own *Judge* and how it may affect us in our therapy role as well as in other aspects of our lives. Our *Judge* may be blocking us from developing our own potential to its fullest or leading us to judge our clients, thus interfering with the therapy process.

The concept of the *Judge* and how it is related to the Jungian archetypes of the vulnerable *inner child* and the strong mature *Warrior* are highly relevant to therapeutic work with addiction recovery, psychotherapy clients, and clients with stress-related illnesses. The concept of the *Judge* is easier to explain to clients and to work with than the related concepts of the *Critical Parent* or Freudian *Superego*. This is because the presence of the *Judge* and its impact in people's lives is so commonly experienced. Because the *Judge* is phenomenological in the way it is experienced by people, the use of art and gestalt techniques to image it in a very concrete form allows clients to confront their own unique *Judge* image or symbol, to feel its psycho-physiological impact, and then to shrink its psychological power over them. When people are guided through this process, there is a dramatic reduction in the intensity of the stress response triggered by their own unique *Judge* image.

It is the psychological power of the *Judge* image or symbol, experienced in a phenomenological way that offers us therapeutic access to this powerful destructive personality part. This process involving imagery can have a much more profound life changing effect than can other more traditional cognitive and verbal therapy processes alone. Shrinking the person's *Judge* is very empowering and results in greatly reducing the inner psychological source of stress.