

TODAY I WILL NOT JUDGE ANYTHING THAT HAPPENS

Week #4 of a 5-Week Series, "A Course in Miracles – Love is Letting Go of Fear"

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Alright, so we're in Week #4 of our five-week series looking at the book of "Love is Letting Go of Fear" by Gerald Jampolsky. It was inspired by "A Course in Miracles." And we are looking at 12 of the lessons to help ourselves find inner peace and a greater sense of connection and oneness with God by literally removing the blocks to our awareness of the experience in the presence of the reality of love.

You know, the book really reminds us that everything we experience in our lives is filtered through our mindsets, through our perceptions, through our perspective and belief systems ... and they can be rooted in either love or fear. And many times it is rooted in fear. In 1 John 4, it says, *"There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear."*

And so, these are the previous ones from the previous weeks of the lessons we've learned to help liberate us and move us from fear to peace and love.

Week #1 was, "All I Give, I Give to Myself." And then the second was, "Forgiveness is the Key to Happiness." The third is, "I am Never Upset for the Reason I Think." "I am Determined to See Things Differently." "I Can Escape the World I See by Giving up Attack Thoughts." And "I am Not a Victim of the World I See."

So, today we're going to look at three more lessons, again: to help us move and remove the blocks of fear to move towards greater peace, love and our oneness with God.

So today, the first one we'll look at -- the lesson -- is: **TODAY I WILL NOT JUDGE ANYTHING THAT HAPPENS.** [Repeats:] Today I will not judge anything that happens.

How many people admit that you judge? You judge other people? Anybody judge yourself? You know, we all judge. And we judge everything! We judge what others do and what they don't do; what they have and what they don't have; how they look and how they don't look; what they wear and what they don't wear; what they eat and what they don't eat; where they live and where they don't live. You name it; someone will judge it! We are very good at judging.

You know, judging is really the ego's way of creating separation. It is the way of dividing the world into good and bad, worthy and unworthy. But love does not separate or divide; it actually unifies. When we suspend our judgment and allow Spirit and the flow of love to guide our perception, that is truly the pathway to peace and oneness.

To not judge sounds passive, but it's not passive. In fact, it's powerful to not judge others or ourselves. It is an act of faith; it's an act of love, and an act of wisdom, and an act of surrender.

How many people believe that, if you really tried, you could not judge anyone or anything for a month? Okay, how about a week? [Congregants laugh] How about an hour? How about for the remainder of this talk? [Congregants laugh]

We think that the reason we judge is because we're surrounded by some knuckleheads and nincompoops who really don't get it. [Congregants laugh] But that would be incorrect. We judge because, at some level, we think we're right. We think we know better. We think secretly that if all the people in our lives would listen to us, the world would be a better place.

You know, here's the newsflash: Judging others has nothing to do with other people. And it has to -- it's about us. You know, judging: the reason we judge is to hide some of our own insecurities. It is to hide

our own shame. To judge is to try and pretend to make ourselves feel more competent, more capable, and even superior, thinking we know better than other people – what's better for them and what's better for everyone. In a way, judging is a way we protect ourselves and keep ourselves safe from that fear: deep doubt that we have that we might not be good enough.

Judging is not a healthy or a wise practice on multiple levels. In the Book of Matthew, Chapter 7, Verse 1-5 it says, *"Judge not, that you not be judged; for with the judgment you pronounce, you will be judged; and the measure you use, it will be measured to you."* And what it's saying is when we send judging energy out in the form of criticism or condemnation or blame or hatred, that energy, in some various forms, will come back to us. That, when we judge others and judge ourselves, it hurts others and it hurts ourselves.

Wayne Dyer said, *"When you judge another, you do not define them; you define yourself."* You know, when we refrain from making judgments, and send only love, peace and love comes back to us.

There are four things that we can do to help ourselves to not judge and stop judging, or at least reduce the amount of judging that we do.

The first one is to have an **awareness and a perspective**. We all have opinions and comments on everything and everyone. And I would say most of the things that we judge are none of our business! We stick our nose in other people's lives -- in their decisions and their choices -- where we don't belong.

"Well, it's none of my business, but ..." Then they'll tell you, *"Oh, and that's just my two cents."* I say keep your two cents! [Congregants laugh] We all need to keep our two cents and butt out, and not judge in other people's lives and their decisions.

My question is: If we know, like scripture says, that judging is not good -- that it's harmful to us all -- why do we still judge? I think two questions we need to ask ourselves when we are tempted to judge ... The first one is: Is this my business? Most likely, the answer is "no." And then the second question would be: Will judging others or myself in this situation help me? And I would suggest the answer is most likely to be "no."

This awareness and perspective I'm talking about basically says: *"I choose to not judge myself or others."* Or, *"I choose to not hurt myself or others by judging."*

The second thing that helps us stop judging is **acceptance**. You know, acceptance is about stopping and forcing and fighting and resisting what has already happened. There are so many things in our lives we go on and think, *"Oh, that was unfair. That's wrong. That should have never happened."*

You know, in the "Big Book" It says, *"Acceptance is the answer to all my problems today."* To find acceptance is one of the most powerful ways to find peace and to live in harmony and awareness.

Mel Robbins puts it this way. She says, *"When other people act that way, let them."* Don't invest your time and energy and get attached and hooked by what other people say or do, even if they're saying and doing things about us.

Gerald Jampolsky said, *"Peace of mind comes from not wanting to change others."* I want you to think for a moment: Anybody in your life right now you'd like to change? And you probably know how you'd like them to change? And what would it look like if you were to just find acceptance that that's just the way they are? And that's just how it is at this moment? I guarantee you, every one of us would feel a greater sense of peace, and we would feel less likely to judge.

The third one that helps us not judge is **compassion**. Jampolsky tells us a story about a guy who goes into this restaurant -- it's a fine restaurant. And the waitress is kind of snippy, and she's kind of cold. And

it's a good quality restaurant, and he usually gets great service. So, he's just thinking, *"What's wrong with her?"* And he is sending her all kinds of attack thoughts.

And Jampolsky said, *"Okay, let's start it over. Suppose when he sits down, I whisper to him that her husband just died two days ago, and she's got five kids that she's got to take care of."* And she acts the same way, and he says his heart softens. He tends to be more understanding and compassionate. And the first time, he left no tip; the second scenario, he left her a tip, because he cared and his heart was opened.

You know, the fact is: everyone in life is dealing with something. They may act in a certain way that we don't like that is not kind and not warm. But the truth is: we're all struggling in some way. And what if we actually put that at the forefront of our mind? To have compassion for a person who might be triggering us in some way? I think we would more than likely be less judging of them if we had more -- and opened our heart to -- compassion.

The fourth and final one that helps us not judge is actually **self-love**. Because every time we judge, it's a call for love. Every time we judge, it's a part of us inside that is hurting; that's not feeling good enough; that's feeling insecure. And so, the more love that we can fill ourselves with -- knowing we're whole, complete, and lacking in nothing -- the less likely we will judge.

So, the more that we can unfold ourselves and love, know that God loves us and believes in us; and the better that we can coach and be our own best friend and validate our struggles -- you know validate, you know our difficulty -- and offer ourselves kindness and to believe in ourselves and reaffirm ourselves, the less likely we are to judge others, as well as ourselves.

You know, not judging: you don't have to be perfect. You just have to be willing. You just have to be willing to try not to judge. Just have to be willing to consciously say, *"Today, I will not judge myself or others."* It's about shifting your mind focus. Instead of being a fault finder -- picking out all the things they don't do well -- to being a "good finder" ... You know, a finder of love.

So, are you willing to stop judging?

"Today, I will not judge anything that happens."

Together: [with congregants] *"Today, I will not judge anything that happens."*

The second thing we can do to free ourselves from fear and move towards peace and love is this lesson: **THIS INSTANT IS THE ONLY TIME THERE IS.** [Repeats:] This instant is the only time there is.

You know, mentally, most of us live more in the past than we would like to admit, living with regret or resentment or just repeating and reliving many unpleasant experiences. Stuck living in the pain of the past; the hurt or the injustice of the past. And we also spend a good bit of time living in the future, projecting towards our goals and dreams, but also projecting our fears; running pictures and scenarios that are negative -- that are worst case -- that might happen to us.

And so, a lot of time we spend dwelling in the past, which we think is bad or painful, or dwelling in the future, which is scary and we worry about. And then sometimes, in the now, the way we treat the now is like, *"It's not enough. This now is not okay. I need a better now than this."*

Eckhart Tolle, author of *"The Power of Now,"* said, *"There is a human compulsion to get away from the now. And it is at the root of a lot of dysfunction in human consciousness."* Our desire to not be present and not be in the now actually loses us our peace and our true power. It disconnects us from God; it disconnects us from ourselves; it blocks our connection to the Infinite -- to the wisdom, the love, the

guidance of God. We lose our clarity of purpose and our sense of focus when we are not in the present moment.

How many people have ever had your body at your desk at work, but your mind was in Hawaii?
[Congregants laugh] How many people have ever been talking to someone -- in a conversation with them -- and you knew they weren't listening to you? They weren't there at all?

You know, the worst thing about not being present in the moment is in relationships. That's where it hurts us the most. When we are not present in relationship, we miss out heart connections. We miss out authentic sharing. We miss out listening and understanding what the person is going through, as well as ourselves. We miss out on closeness. We miss out on building trust and honesty.

And by focusing on the now, we cultivate mindfulness; we help our relationships; we reduce stress and anxiety; we develop inner strength. I mean, life opens up the more we live in the present moment.

And the fact is: because we live in the past and the future so much, we learn we have to work and practice and learn how to live and be more in the present. Eckhart Tolle recommends three things.

Number one: Do a little **five-minute practice of connecting with your sense perceptions**. Like, spend one minute -- or even 30 seconds -- being aware of what you see; being present to everything that you see. And just be totally in tune with what you're seeing. And then for the next minute, just be aware of the sounds that you're hearing: the air conditioning, my voice, whatever it might be. And then switch to the sense of smell. And then you switch to your sense of taste.

Like, I had a peach the other day. Oh, my God, it was the most juicy, delicious peach I've ever had. But to be fully present to what you're tasting. You know, sometimes we're so not there, we don't even taste the food that we're eating. We are ramming it in so fast, and our mind's on something else, that we don't taste the food. Imagine slowing down to see, to hear, to smell, to taste and to feel.

Friday, I felt a drench of rain falling and water in my shoes. It was a beautiful feeling ... until I got to my towel, and then I was happy to have a different one. But there are all kinds of senses that we have that we're not always tuned into. He said just a five-minute thing can help us be more present and more in the now.

The second one is **silence and meditation**: to just quiet our minds, to follow our breath, to close our eyes. One thing I find so amazing is: as great as this physical world is, the thing that makes us feel the most peace is closing our eyes and just taking a few deep breaths. You know why? Because it connects us to the truth that we are. We're not just physical beings; we're spiritual beings. So, connecting and getting to our breath, closing our eyes, we actually connect to our true nature. We connect to our own Source. Because everything we see comes from what is unseen. It is not the visible but the invisible Power and Presence within us that makes all things possible.

And the third one to be more present live in the now is to **be fully engaged in whatever you're doing**. That, whatever you're doing, be present to yourself; be present to your work; be present to what you're feeling. You know, to live more consciously and engaged in what your life is.

And if this moment is about tears and grief, then cry and feel that part of the moment. And if it's to laugh or to dance or to help someone else, be present and engaged in whatever those moments might be. Don't numb yourself out to your life, but actually live your life.

Someone once said, "*If not us, who? If not now, when?*" Do you know this is the most powerful time of your life? You have got more experience, more wisdom, more knowledge than you have ever had. This is a time to forgive. This is a time to love. This is the time to change and to learn and to grow.

You know, this lesson -- this instant is the only time there is -- is a reminder to live your life now. Leo Buscaglia said, *"If you miss love, you miss life."* And I would say If you miss this now moment, you miss life. The more moments we miss, the more of life we miss."

I had a friend, Bob Koehler; one of my favorite quotes is, he said, *"On the day you were born, you were given the opportunity of a lifetime."* And the question is: What are we all doing with the opportunity of our lifetime? How are we living our lifetime?

"This instant is the only time there is."

Together: [with congregants] *"This instant is the only time there is."*

The last one is: **THE PAST IS OVER; IT CAN TOUCH ME NOT.**

There's a beautiful Charlie Brown cartoon. And Charlie Brown is coming in from the outfield and he's about to hand the baseball to Lucy, who is the manager. And he says, *"Sorry I dropped that easy fly ball, manager. I thought I had it, and then I remembered all the other ones I dropped. I guess the past got in my eyes."*

How many people ever let the past get into your eyes and you repeat it? A negative experience or relive a certain painful pattern? And sometimes we carry a lot of the weight of the past in our hearts and minds of our mistakes, of the losses, of the woundedness that we experienced. And we really need to process and release those to free ourselves to move on to something greater. Because sometimes the past isn't over in the way we live our life; we're still carrying a lot of it.

But the truth is: our past does not have to equal our future. Gerald Jampolsky says this; he says, *"Releasing the past means no blaming anyone, including ourselves. It means holding no grievances and totally accepting everyone, making no exceptions."* It means a willingness to see only the light in someone, and not just their lampshade or not just the outer circumstance and conditions.

Actress Viola Davis grew up in extreme poverty and experienced racism and hunger and emotional trauma. And she rose and didn't let the past be equal her future. And she has gone on to be an incredible actress: won an Oscar; won a Tony; won an Emmy award. And she's an advocate for mental health and poverty awareness. She wrote a book -- to inspire others -- of her life called *"Finding Me."*

Demi Lovato, the singer, battled with drug addiction, eating disorders, traumas, mental health from a young age. And she went on to not only be a great singer, a songwriter, an actress, she's an advocate for mental health and LGBTQ rights and addiction recovery, as well. She says, *"You are not your past. You are not your mistakes. You can rise again."*

And, finally, Tyler Perry: he survived abuse, homelessness, and was living in his car for a while, while he was trying to build his career. Today, he is a billionaire filmmaker, actor, and has founded one of the largest film studios in the United States. And he consciously provides -- has provided -- thousands of jobs for black artists and created inclusion films. And he said, *"It doesn't matter what your past is; you can always begin again."*

Each of these individuals refused to let the past define them. They took time to heal emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. They turned their pain into purpose, and they all used their platform to serve and uplift others. You know, the important thing here is their perspective: their perspective on the past absolutely launched them into greater possibilities of tomorrow.

A young woman went off to college and, after being gone for a couple of semesters, wrote her parents a letter: *"Dear Mom and Dad, I'm sorry I haven't written lately, but all my things were destroyed in the dorm fire. My eyes are completely healed now and the doctor assures me that my lungs aren't*

permanently damaged from the smoke. While the dorm was being rebuilt, I moved in with my boyfriend. I think you met him. His name is Roy, and you saw him at the parent's weekend. He's the one with the green hair and the safety pins in his nose. I know how much you always wanted grandchildren, so you'll be happy to know I'm expecting a baby that'll be here by the end of the summer."

The letter goes on. She says, *"Well, you'll be happy to know that there was no fire. My eyes are just fine. My lungs are fine. I'm not living with Roy; he's not even my boyfriend. And I'm definitely not pregnant. However, I did get a D in English, an F in French and I need more money."* [Congregants laugh] *"I wrote you this way to help you keep things in perspective."* [Congregants laugh]

Perspective! It is an important thing -- how we see life. I've got to tell you, one of the things is: that, when we judge, we really dishonor our nature. When we judge, we honor the greatest commandment, which is to love God; to love others as we love ourselves. When we judge, we bring ourselves down. We hurt ourselves and block our sense of peace and love.

But every time we choose not to judge, it lifts us. That every time we choose to overcome the past, it uplifts us. Every time we choose to accept and have compassion, it uplifts us and transforms us.

"Today I will not judge anything that happens."

Together: [with congregants] *"Today I will not judge anything that happens."*

"This instant is the only time there is."

Together: [with congregants] *"This instant is the only time there is."*

"The past it is over; it can touch me not."

[With congregants:] *"The past is over; it can touch me not."*

Our goal is to realize that love is our nature. Love is the reason that we are here. And love truly is letting go of fear.

God bless you all!