

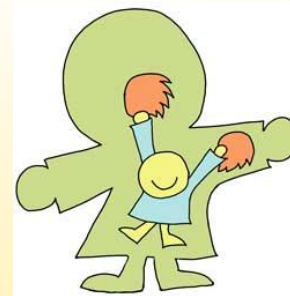
Pondering Point

We are our own worst critics. Ever heard that? Many of us beat ourselves up, criticize our every move and become disappointed with ourselves too often. We've been taught to believe that negative feedback is the only effective way to motivate change. Lucky for us, that is not always how it works. **When we stand in judgment of ourselves, we stand in the way of growth.** When we are harsh on ourselves we invalidate our motives and undermine our intentions. In a world where human beings are constantly striving for validation, negative thoughts can be extremely counterproductive.

When we feel good about ourselves, we tend to be more confident with our decisions and can process information with higher comprehension. We attract positive energy and are more productive. Consistently criticizing ourselves can be detrimental to our self-esteem. It stresses us out and leads to health problems like high blood pressure and anxiety. It is important to be empathic to others as a sign of respect. *Are we showing empathy to ourselves? If we are not gentle to ourselves, are we disrespecting ourselves? Are we comparing ourselves to others? Can we see our unique traits and what we bring to the table?* We may be measuring ourselves against what we think others expect from us. So, be gentle to yourself. We all make mistakes.

Be GENTLE to yourself.

Are we valuing the creativity and diversity of thought that we bring to every situation?



Imagine... attracting the people, things and events that match the quality and intensity of your positive beliefs about yourself.

— From Pondering to Practice —

Reflection:

When you make a mistake or things don't go your way, pause and see if you can identify the lesson in the experience.

Reflect quietly on your own.

- Are there times when we beat ourselves up?
- What can we do to change this?

Activity:

If people are comfortable they can share with the group what they learned about themselves from the above reflection and what their next steps are.

Be gentle with yourself today and every day and give yourself credit for what you've already accomplished and hope for everything that's to come.

"Remember to be gentle with yourself and others. We are all children of chance and none can say why some fields will blossom while others lay brown beneath the August sun."

- Kent Nerburn

