

THE LEARNER-JUDGER MINDSET MODEL

At any moment we're all faced with two basic "mindsets" to choose from: Judger or Learner.

Choosing our mindset is one of the most significant choices we make as we move through life. The two options lead to very different results.

<p>JUDGER Mindset</p> <p>Judgmental (of self and others) Reactive and automatic Know-it-already Blame Inflexible and rigid Either/or thinking Self-righteous Own point of view only Defends assumptions More statements and opinions Possibilities seen as limited Primary mood: protective</p>	<p>LEARNER Mindset</p> <p>Accepting (of self and others) Responsive and thoughtful Values not knowing (researcher mindset) Responsibility Flexible and adaptive Both/and thinking Inquisitive Considers multiple perspectives Questions assumptions More questions and curiosity Possibilities seen as unlimited Primary mood: curious</p>
<p>JUDGER Relationships</p> <p>Win-lose relationships Sense of being separate Fears differences Debates Criticizes Listens for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right/wrong • Agree/disagree • Differences Feedback seen as rejection Seeks to attack or defend</p>	<p>LEARNER Relationships</p> <p>Win-win relationships Sense of being connected Values differences Dialogues Critiques Listens for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facts • Understanding • Commonalities Feedback seen as helpful Seeks to resolve and create</p>

Here are some examples of questions asked from each mindset:

JUDGER Questions	LEARNER Questions
What's wrong?	What's right?
Whose fault is it?	What am I responsible for?
How can I stay in control?	What are my choices?
Why is this a failure?	What's good or useful about this?
How could I lose?	What can I/we learn from this?
How could I get hurt?	What possibilities does this open up?
Why can't you get it right?	How can we stay on track?

By being aware of our mindset in the moment, by being an open-minded observer of ourselves, we have the possibility of choosing. And in choosing, we open up the possibility of shaping our results to be closer to what we really want.

Judger and Learner are both part of being human. We will always be a blend of both parts, moving from one to the other as we navigate through our lives. The bottom-line: Accept Judger, Practice Learner.

Source: Adapted from Marilee Adams, "Change Your Questions, Change Your Life," San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2004