

## Comparing Mind – Junkyard Dog

*The problem with in-laws  
Is the concern  
For their family values  
Not you  
The mind's orientation  
Toward the soul  
Is similar*

JH

It's impossible to judge a book by its cover if there is no comparing mind. If there is no reference point for comparison then, it's damn difficult to find fault with anything.

Now, a comparing mind can be a good thing when it's functioning free of the "judging mind"; "inner critic"; [superego](#); or "junkyard dog". It helps us to get home with a sack of oranges instead of a box of zucchini. But, unless we have engaged in specific work on this part of ourselves, it's a given that it is running amok and causing us an enormous amount of suffering.

If we really look into the situation, we find that this junkyard dog is just plain mean and nasty. It's being driven by self-hatred and it's using our libidinal energy (life force) against us. I wish it weren't so, but the situation is even worse.

Many of us are involved in some kind of personal growth work. The [enneagram of personality types](#) offers a great tool for bringing unconscious patterns and traits into consciousness. It also gives us some understanding of the underlying dynamics of attention, ego defenses, and existential issues. Pretty neat tool, until we start using it to compare ourselves to others.

We get this great list of traits that are easily divided into plus and minus columns. And, some folks have even provided us with lines of continuum so we can gauge our evolution. There is nothing this dog loves more than a +/- continuum. With a couple of these in its arsenal, it can hound us day and night. When it comes to being real, ego is basically dysfunctional. Orienting it toward a continuum of improvement will not introduce the real into our experience.

The thing about this critic or judge is that it needs a point of reference to be active. This is where our internalized ideals come in real handy and one of the great ones is the idealized spiritual image. Don't think for a second that this rascal isn't involved in our "[spiritual quest](#)". This scalawag has been known to don a robe, halo, and harp to keep "helping" us along the way. "The road to hell is paved with good intentions", is applicable here. This kindhearted mongrel (oops, sorry, this judge actually has no heart) is now an unnecessary piece of machinery simply running on autopilot these days. Its original programming is no longer needed, but we don't know how to turn it off. In fact, many of us are scared to death to turn it off because it accounts for about 90% of our mental-activity and self-identity. Think not? A little self-observation goes a long way.

What's really interesting about this thing is: it's an obsolete machine that actually believes that it knows something about reality. That it can compare things to reality and make some statement of

truth about such things. I tell you, if it weren't such an insidious instrument of torture, its constant blabbering about what it thinks it knows about our best interests would be hilarious.

One of the first things we need in order to engage in a deep exploration of ourselves is some space, some relief from the demands of the inner critic. It stands to reason that if the status quo continues then, we'll just keep going around in circles and become more frustrated. We need to get out of the box – out of our type – out of the whole damn ego structure. [Byron Brown's book, "Soul without Shame"](#), is a great resource for learning how to begin disengaging from the junkyard dog.

*When people accuse you  
Of inappropriate behavior  
Reply  
"Sometimes I'm like that"  
Even if it's false  
You just made someone  
Happy*

JH

It's weird how knowing a few things about our personality can actually help. But our attention needs to be focused first on Being, then personality. The exploration of our type needs to be in the service of freeing our self from it, not improving it, evolving it, or learning all the nuances of it. A fairly common technique for learning is to highlight important points in a text. Another is to black out everything known and concentrate on the unknown. We can focus on the obvious or we can venture into the unknown.

A few signposts are all that soul in search of Truth needs. If the "flame" is burning brightly and the longing is conscious then – what more is needed than a couple of good pointers or an obvious doorway? The comparing mind needs a whole lot more. Give it a great personality typing system or a sophisticated cosmology and it can really demonstrate to us just how much time can be spent in "getting ready" for reality.

There is a great misunderstanding that the human soul needs ego to function in this world. The development of the ego is a stage in the evolution of the [soul](#). It is needed for a period of time until the soul develops certain capacities. After that a specific quality of the soul, the personal essence, can be nurtured and matured to call forth the true human being. A few spiritual teachings acknowledge and address this, yet the great majority of people and teachers don't seem to believe it possible.

In general, the prevalent understanding still remains one of "ego renovation" into a better self. But, this is exactly the missed point; working on improving the ego keeps you stuck in the ego. Attention needs to shift to the unfoldment of the soul and a deeper understanding of the nature of the soul. The ego needs to be dissolved, not refurbished.

Using a set of magnifying lenses for microscopic work is appropriate, but wearing those lenses twenty-four hours a day is not. Yet, this is exactly what many do with the enneagram, continuously using it as a filter to see and understand themselves and others through. Using the enneagram for specific exploration of the personality to reveal some of the barriers constricting the soul is fine, but

using it as a veil to view the world through lengthens one's jail time.

Studying the enneagram for a couple of years to gain a better understanding of one's dilemma and using that information in the service of freedom is well and good. However, if we do not use this insight to go into the deeper places, the deficiencies and holes within our structure, then we are basically doing very little other than supplying our comparing mind with another sophisticated system of reference to get lost within.

The soul, the heart, the mind, and the body each have dimensions and capacities that extend beyond the reach of the enneagram of personality types. When we insist on interpreting an individual's work on their heart in terms of an enneagram dynamic, we lose sight of a much greater perspective and we do a real disservice to that person. Sandra Maitri's books on the [spiritual dimensions of the enneagram](#) are excellent to help open up this perspective as is [A. H. Almaas' book on the Holy Ideas](#).

You could say that [freedom](#) is knowing our self beyond the reach of the enneagram and functioning from that place. Using the knowledge of the enneagram to discover a few clues about what needs to be addressed is helpful, but what is our heart's desire?