



## Stanford eCorner

### Confront Your Inner Judge

Shirzad Chamine, *Positive Intelligence, Inc.*

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/5117/Confront-Your-Inner-Judge>

Executive coach Shirzad Chamine discusses what he calls “Saboteurs,” the negative inner voices in our heads that helped with our physical and emotional survival as children — but that hold us back as adults. One Saboteur in particular, the Judge, is the one that torments you about your flaws, finds fault in others and causes stress and unhappiness. Negative emotions and reactions are natural, but should be seen as harmful and quickly dismissed, Chamine says.



#### Transcript

every single one of them basically come into your life as you try to answer the following question, "To survive and succeed, I should ..." Saboteurs come into your life and take hold in your brain and become neural pathways in your brain in automatic reactions to things as you try to answer "To Survive and Succeed, I should ..." and every kid answers that question differently 'cause every kid is wired differently and every kid has different challenges, you end up answering that question in a way that develops the kind of saboteurs that you have. And we all end up having some of these saboteurs. There is one saboteur that's universal and that's The Judge. And many of you have known about one small element of The Judge which we call the inner critic, but The Judge is really much bigger than just the inner critic. The Judge is the one that's not only constantly beating the crap out of you to tell you what's wrong with you, "You idiot. Why aren't you getting better? "Why did you make this mistake?" It's also constantly finding faults with others. And so, one of the key culprits of my entrepreneurial meltdown was that this character was running wild in my head with immunity and that I believed every word that this character told me. So The Judge, as things started going wrong in my company, everything that has started going wrong, first of all, The Judge would come beat the crap out of me, "What's wrong with you? You idiot. "With all this training and all these promises, "how can you make such stupid mistakes?" And as it was beating the crap out of me, it also started finding what was wrong with you and what was wrong with you and what was wrong with this VP and what was wrong with my president, what was wrong with my board. It found everything that was wrong with everybody else.

Why? Because both of those were about my emotional survival as a kid. As a kid, I have been told, "Look, if you wanna be ambitious and achieve things, "you gotta be hard on yourself. "You gotta keep pushing yourself, pushing yourself. "You gotta keep telling yourself things that are wrong. "You gotta keep beating yourself up. "That's a good thing to do." I had been told my judge is a good thing for me, good for my survival. And once it beat the crap out of me, I had also learned to judge everybody else because gee, it's really hard to be the only loser in the world, right? So, my judge was saying I'm a loser, but so are you. Everybody's an idiot. Everybody has flaws and I am flawed so I'm gonna survive. And what I didn't know is that this character was actually quite destructive and that the character that keeps making you feel bad about yourself is actually not good for you.

The one that constantly beats you up for what's wrong with you and others is not good for you. It's actually a saboteur that's quite destructive. Now you might be asking a very important question right now which is, "But aren't negative emotions "actually good for you? "Aren't negative emotions actually good for you? "Isn't The Judge helpful for you "by pushing you and beating you up and all that? "Isn't that good for your performance?" And the answer to that, to answer that, let me answer a separate question first. Is pain ever good for you? Is it good to feel pain? The answer is of course. If you put your hand on a hot stove and if you don't feel pain, you're not gonna react accordingly and you'll burn your hand to the bone, right? So feeling pain

is really good for you. It is awesome to feel pain. The question is how long would it be good for you to feel the pain before you remove your hand from the hot stove? And the answer hopefully is a split second. Just long enough to know that there's a problem here, right? Same exact thing with negative emotions. Is it good to feel anger, shame, guilt, disappointment, all of these stuff, when something is going wrong? The answer is of course it is. If you didn't feel any of those negative emotions, you'll keep doing the thing and not improve anything.

The question is how long is it good to feel bad after the failure? How long is it good to feel shame after something that you do that doesn't go well? How long is it good to feel guilt, to feel stress over what's gonna happen? The answer is a split second. Long enough for you to pay attention and take corrective action. If you stay in negative emotion for more than split second, you're hijacked by your saboteurs. It's gonna mess with your performance. And that's true with all saboteurs. Any time you're in negative emotion for more than a few seconds, you are hijacked by a part of your brain that's not serving you because your path to highest performance is through positive energy. So basically then, strategy number two becomes making sure that you expose and weaken your judge saboteur by calling it bullshit. By basically saying, "Actually, beating the crap out of me "for the fifth time over the mistake I did yesterday "is not very helpful, sir. "It's not. I got the message.

"It's no longer serving. "You are now sabotaging me."