

# Judgment Embers

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**Theme:** Issue resolution: examining the judgments we make of others and the ones they make of us.

**Age of campers:** 13+

**Time allotted/actual:** 45-75 minutes

**Location:** Anywhere with comfortable seating by a campfire.

**Props/Materials/Symbols:** Pens, and many small strips of paper.

**Prep done:** Cut out all the strips of paper and bring them to meet everyone.

**Opening/Mood set:** Introduce the topic of examining judgments, and what judgmental words are.

## Questions/Activities:

**1<sup>st</sup> activity:** Give each of the campers 3 pieces of paper. On each paper they write down something they consider to be a judgment; tell them to do 2 negative and 1 positive (e.g. selfish, ugly, friendly). When they are done, they put their papers face down on a pile. When they are done, shuffle and lay them all out for everyone to see.

**2<sup>nd</sup> activity:** Ask the campers to each pick up 2 things that they think may describe them. Have them explain their reasons. At this point, it is likely that both the nicest and the worst judgments are left. Ask each camper to pick up 1 more judgment, 1 at a time. As they pick it up, they can explain how they feel to be labeled as such.

**3<sup>rd</sup> activity:** Talk about how judgments affect people and how we don't always have a choice over how we are judged. What is out there that we are not even aware of?

**Closing:** Burn the judgments all at once in the campfire and let them go. Discuss the symbolism of releasing the fear of judgment and moving on.

**Were other people involved?** None needed.

**Thoughts on pacing?** There is potential in this embers for a large can of worms to open. For instance, if the way the word "judgments" is presented is left open for the writing exercise, then it is not uncommon for what is written to have personal tweaks to it that can leave burns. If your group is ready for that and you feel you can facilitate their journey, bring them there. If not, consider control features such as limiting judgments to one-word generalizations such as those suggested in parentheses above.

**What would you change next time / what did you learn / how would you enhance it?** Hold additional space on the importance of letting go. The release is key to this embers, as it is undesirable to have campers dwell on the judgments more than is necessary in order to confront and release them.

**Camper feedback:** Uncomfortable at first, but eventually very engaged.