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Diminish No One

Once upon a time Sam started a new job in a new city, at a new company called Top Banana Institute.

He had worked for four companies in fifteen years and always enjoyed his work. The only thing he ever struggled with was office politics. Usually he stayed away from difficult interactions, but sometimes things could really heat up during meetings. This was not a pleasant time for Sam.

A few weeks before he had been interviewed and hired by a company in another city. While he never visited the eventual work location, Sam had high hopes for his new employer. The grapevine had it that this new office and company had conquered all office politics and actually worked under something called “Office Peace” as a motto.

While he didn’t have the details he was skeptical that anyone could make an office free of politics. People cooperating freely seemed like a dream. Well, there was only one way to find out, he thought as he drove along. Go in and see what happens.

As Sam pulled into the parking lot he became unnerved as he could not find a place to park. There were two types of markings on the parking spaces. A few were marked “Distinguished Guest” and all the rest were marked “Employee of the Year.” Since he was neither he drove around in confusion. Eventually, with more than a little guilt, he pulled into a parking space marked “Employee of the Year.” He figured

after checking in and finding out where all the other employees parked he could move his car. Meanwhile there were plenty of spaces left for the obviously large group of people who won this award.

As he entered the lobby all his senses were engaged. He smelled apple pie, heard a piano being played (and not by a professional) there was a waterfall going with a small pond and fish swimming around, even money at the bottom of the pool. Plants and brightly colored flowers were everywhere. Along one wall there was a bubble gum dispenser with the long curved slide that you see in toy stores, and next to that was a candy machine. Neither, he noted, required coins to dispense. Sam guessed those went really fast each day. Large colorful kites hung from the ceiling along with wall hangings that extolled the wonderful people who worked for the company and the great clients the company was privileged to work with, and finally a beautiful statement about the honor the company had to serve the world with their product.

“Sam” he heard in a loud pleasant voice, as a large woman of indeterminate age rushed towards him with her hand out. “We are thrilled you are here today. I hope your trip to our city was pleasant.” Sam grasped the firm, warm hand extended to him and noted the large name badge that read Dottie. “I did have a nice trip, thank you. I took my new boss’s advice and saw some of the country along the way. He gave me some wonderful spots to visit with the time I had before I started.” “Great!” replied Dottie, “I hope your new home is suitable?” “Yes,” replied Sam, “I was surprised to find the refrigerator stocked and the basket of supplies and city information. I was starving when I got in and too tired to go out. It was a great relief.”

Dottie then asked Sam the strangest question he had ever heard during a first meeting.

“Would you mind if I gave you a welcome hug?” Sam, while not a real hugging kind of guy said, “sure, why not” and was immediately wrapped up in a big bear hug. Dottie quickly explained that the company

was honored and grateful when people chose to join their team. They wanted to show it in every way possible. “If you had said no,” Dottie noted, “I would respect that too. However based on the type of people we look for and hire they almost always say yes because *They Know How To Accept Love and Respect As Well As Give Them.*”

“As you can see my name is Dottie and I want you to know that *I Will Always Be There For You* when you ask for help, if it is humanly possible for me to do so.”

Sam’s head was spinning at this point and he wasn’t sure if he had shown up for work or therapy. Overall he was feeling pretty good for some reason and ready to see more.

Dottie looped her arm through Sam’s and led him across the lobby, where Sam noted a few employees playing a jazz version of chopsticks on the piano and laughing themselves silly. “Before I forget,” said Sam “I need to move my car.” Dottie smiled, asked where he had parked, and assured him it was fine just where it was. She smiled mysteriously when Sam indicated he didn’t want to take an award winner’s spot and again Dottie told him he was fine parked where he was.

After a quick and painless processing of his ID and necessary payroll papers, Dottie handed him a badge like hers with his name in very large letters, but with a large gold star in the corner. Sam inquired about the star and was told that it indicated that he was in his first week with the company. Sam noted that she also had a star but with a different color and asked if she was new as well. Dottie said no, she had been there for quite a while. Sam decided this was one of the strangest places he had been in and wondered what was in store next.

Dottie made a quick phone call to a colleague to cover the front desk for her. In a flash Mark showed up and introduced himself to Sam with a smile and a handshake. “You probably already got the Dottie hug, so I’ll spare you any further embarrassment,” he chuckled. He fished in his pocket for a card and handed it to Sam with the comment that Sam

should call his extension at any time with questions. He also added it would be his privilege to take him to lunch today. They arranged to meet at the front desk at noon and then Mark went to answer the front desk phone while Dottie steered Sam through the doors off the lobby.

As Sam entered the main area of offices he was taken by surprise. The entire place was well lit, with natural light pouring in through the offices on the exterior to the glassed-in offices in the interior. You could see from one end of the building to the other, yet the noise level was almost negligible. Bright plants and flowers again adorned every corner and creative, colorful balloons hung from the ceiling. It was almost like working outdoors, but somehow the glare of the sunlight was muted by the tinted glass on the side of the building. Eventually the ringing of phones, laughter and conversation made it into Sam's senses, but again he could not say it was overwhelming.

Dottie was watching him with a bemused expression, "Like what you see?" "Well I'm not sure," said Sam. "It is definitely light and airy and fun, but there isn't much privacy is there?" "Well," said Dottie, "We are a company, which to us means *A Collection Of People Working Together To Do Something Great In The World*. In order to accomplish that we *Have To Work Together*. If we are all locked away behind walls we may get work done, but it might not all fit together as it needs to. Let me give you a quick tour to show you how we create privacy for those who need it, and we know that some do."

Sam noted as they walked the corridors that each office was clearly marked with the first and last names of the people who resided in them, followed by a long large print statement of *What That Person Did To Make The Company Successful*. Sam saw statements like, "I am the payroll clerk. My job is to see that each employee receives the correct pay for their work, that all appropriate governmental deductions are applied and that all benefits and other deductions are done accurately. My work is done to the best of my ability so that employees at the Top

Banana Institute will not ever be distracted by an inaccurate check or any problems with their benefits or other deductions. Since mistakes can occur my email is listed below and I will respond to your problem on the same day or my email will let you know when it may be longer.” Sam smiled and thought, “That is quite a commitment, *Same Day Response?* How does she do that?” Dottie smiled as she saw what Sam was thinking and explained that his orientation would answer many of the questions popping up in his mind.

Sam continued following Dottie through the company while she noted the location of the restrooms, employee cafeteria and several other exits out of the building other than the way he had entered. Dottie introduced Sam to Philip and Carol and indicated that they would be his orienteers for the day. She also indicated that each day throughout the week he would meet new orienteers. With a smile and a wave she headed toward her desk in the lobby.

Philip and Carol shook his hand and began walking along a corridor in the back, away from the offices. Sam could hear loud laughter coming from behind a closed door, music from another and then there were several open doors. Carol motioned Sam into one of the rooms and to a seat at the table. Sam was overwhelmed by the room. Besides being bright and airy as all the building seemed to be, he was surrounded with toys, hats, beach balls, and even things like hula hoops leaning up against the wall. He noticed a smiley face outside this door as well as the closed doors that he passed.

Carol began, “Sam, we want to welcome you on behalf of all the employees and customers at the Top Banana Institute.” We are honored that you chose us to be your employer and to share your gifts and talents with us. In the next few days we will orient you to our company and show you the underlying principles that make us not only a good company, but a great company. We want you to know that your work here is important to everyone. All functions in this organization are

treated with respect whether you are the CEO or the janitor. No one person is more or less important than any other. *Respect For One Another* is something you hear all the time, but in our organization we take it one step further. *At No Time And In No Way Will We Ever Diminish Anyone*. This applies to employees, vendors, our customers, and anyone else that comes to our organization. Today your orientation will be about learning what this concept means and how you function with this intention. The reason we do this on the first day of orientation is to avoid even one negative comment about people and what they are or are not doing. Once someone says something that diminishes another it can spread like a terrible virus and will never be repaired.”

Philip jumped in at this point. “You have probably heard people say again and again that you need to forgive and forget, but we hope to take this a step further by never creating situations between people that require forgiveness or forgetting. Does this make sense to you?”

Sam blinked for a minute and then stammered, “I’m not sure I get what you are talking about but I like the idea that no one ever has to be diminished. I’ve seen too many good employees hurt by idle office gossip.”

Philip smiled and continued, “I’m glad you agree that this is a good thing. It is not only about office gossip though; it is about when people offer ideas, make mistakes and may not be working up to par.” We have created a climate in this organization where you do not dwell on what they have done wrong, but what can be done to fix the problem, where lessons can be learned and applied. It is about when someone offers an idea you are sure will never work, that you honor that idea. One of the ways we do this is by avoiding, when possible, using the word ‘but.’

‘But?’ Sam inquired. ‘But,’ said Phillip with a grin. “But is a word that basically negates what a person has said. Instead we chose to use ‘and’ or ‘or.’ In this way we honor what the person has said then add new ideas to theirs, thus growing thoughts rather than negating and replacing

thoughts. Thoughts that grow organically, one to the other, are always more powerful and have more energy because everyone has a little piece of what they offered in them.”

“I guess I never looked at ‘but’ that way, and it makes sense.” Sam offered.

“Think how often you have felt diminished when people have responded to your ideas negatively,” Carol asked. Sam paused for a few moments and thought about it. He knew that he was able to take criticism well; he also knew that there was an uncomfortable feeling right after the comment and he tended to be a little quieter after the person spoke up, particularly in meetings. “I would love to know that I was never holding back, however I have noticed that sometimes after someone has ‘but’-ted me I do tend to shut down a little,” Sam confessed. “Exactly,” cried Carol, “and we don’t ever want that to happen here.” Everything everyone says has value, even if it doesn’t exactly fit at the moment. Who knows, a week from now it may be the brilliant answer to a different situation. We work hard to see that no one is ever diminished by what we say. People thus feel free to offer unusual and different ideas to situations, and we get a lot of good things going very quickly and easily. We also go home at night able to say, ‘*I Diminished No One Today.*’ This is probably the best feeling in the world. We worked hard, played together well in the sandbox and honored each other in our words and in our actions.”

Sam’s head was swirling. Wasn’t orientation about who, how, where, why and what we do? Why was this concept the focus of an entire day of orientation?

Philip could feel Sam’s uneasiness and confusion, remembering his own first day at the Top Banana Institute. It wasn’t natural not to criticize. It was supposed to be healthy to create challenge in the organization so things will be well thought out. Only after many months of watching this concept in action was Philip fully convinced. He knew

there were only so many words that he could use to describe this idea. He then came up with an idea of his own. “Let’s drop in on the meeting next door so you can watch this concept at work. I happen to know they are working on the new marketing campaign for the latest version of the ‘Top Bananas Don’t Get Mashed’ video, and there are many diverse opinions about which is the best way to go,” Philip offered.

Sam, Carol and Philip headed into the meeting room next door. “Sorry to interrupt, but we are demonstrating ‘*Diminsh No One*’ to a new employee. We were wondering if we could observe your meeting to help illustrate the concept,” asked Philip. “Of course,” responded the man standing at the front of the room wearing moose ears. Stretching his hand out to Sam he introduced himself and all of the other people in the room along with a description of their role, in the meeting.

The meeting reconvened and a lively discussion ensued about whether comedy, safety, drama, simplicity or high definition computer graphics would be best for the first marketing of this new product. Sam watched in awe while all ideas were given nods and placed on the white board walls of the room. Colorful markers distinguished different concepts and the group was making remarkable progress very quickly. At one sticking point someone reached for a beach ball and tossed it to someone who had been more silent, and asked for their thoughts. Rather than being offended or put off the person blurted out a very silly comment. The group quickly white boarded it and asked for more information. The person indicated they had been silent while thinking along another line not yet brought up. A discussion of this new line followed for about five minutes and some revisions were made to other white boarded comments. The room was full of smiles.

Sam leaned over to Philip and whispered, “What just happened?” Philip replied, “We want everyone in the room to know they have value. Later this week you will be learning that ‘*No Idea Is Without Merit.*’ You just got a glimpse of how powerful that statement can be. You will note

the group took time to briefly discuss what was brought up. It broke the stalemate they were in, and the person feels good about being part of the group. When you *Diminish No One* you will see things move quickly, easily and peaceably.”

Carol, Philip and Sam left the room a short time later. “What did you think?” asked Carol. “I’m not sure what I saw in there,” said Sam. “I know everyone sure had a lot of energy, while there was not yet agreement, you could almost feel the ideas beginning to gel around one concept so strongly that it was going to pop off the wall as the way to go.

“Was there something else going on? I didn’t get the sense there was the usual endless meeting taking place,” replied Sam.

Philip spoke up, “It wasn’t obvious to you but in the corner of the room was a large sand-filled hourglass that was running. Each meeting room has a thirty minute, sixty minute, ninety minute and a two-hour hourglass. The movement of the sand is a visual reminder of the flow of time and our need to move along. Everyone in the room picked two hours for this meeting and agreed to move along thoughts and ideas to meet this deadline. The leader in the room was accepted and honored for keeping things going and acknowledging the time agreed upon to get it done.”

“Our groups,” interjected Carol, “understand that unlimited time meetings are just inviting things like conflict and low energy into the room. With these set times they can look at the progress they made in that time frame, and portion out assignments to people in the room to research and reconvene later to be more effective. We know meetings are necessary and we know people have limited attention spans and other things to do. If that group does not conclude today, they will meet again later in the day or tomorrow. The agenda will become tighter and tighter until the task is completed. The meetings will not get longer, nor will they be allowed too many more so everyone knows the best way to work is to *Be Involved And Get It Solved.*”

“Okay, I have to ask.” said Sam, “What was with the Moose ears?”

Carol and Philip laughed. “He was putting on his thinking cap,” offered Carol. “His thinking cap, that is the strangest thing I have ever heard,” said Sam. “Well you better get used to it because we all have them, even multiple sets of them,” said Philip. “We use them to get our thought process going by creating smiles in the people around us and a smile in ourselves. You’ll learn more about smiling on your day of smiling practice and then it will make more sense.”

Carol, Philip and Sam proceeded back to their original meeting room. Carol and Philip explained in detail, with illustrations to Sam what *Diminish No One* meant. They looked at newspaper headlines, clips from television shows, and office videos on things not going right, and how each situation was handled without diminishing the other person. They also looked at how easily society accepts diminishment, even to the point of making sitcoms that use it for their entire premise. They discussed how small children start this behavior in the sandbox, and then carry it into the schools and finally to their place of work. Carol and Philip talked earnestly about why and how this should not occur in their company. They showed that diminishing no one contributed to a better bottom line in terms of profits and the making of a great place to work.

Sam’s head was swimming as he followed Carol and Philip through the offices, the plant area and the shipping area. He noticed when something not very smart happened, managers and colleagues alike substituted their criticism with words of kindness in correcting the behavior. The energy of peace permeated even the toughest situations. Sam could tell that employees making mistakes were quick to pick up and correct their behavior to return the honor received in words of kindness. What is this place, Sam thought. I feel like I am in an unreal world. Can people really spend an entire day diminishing no one? The thought went through Sam’s head as they walked by the door to the employee parking lot. Sam noticed a sign over the door in large letters,

“*Thank You For Diminishing No One Today.*” I guess my question

is answered, thought Sam.

As the day ended Carol and Philip asked Sam to do some homework overnight. “When you are out in the world tonight, buying groceries, going to a movie, doing your laundry at the Laundromat, practice this concept to see how easy it is. When there aren’t any washers and you have to wait, don’t diminish the people that got there first. When the line at the express is held up because the person can’t find their wallet, don’t diminish them in your mind by calling them names, and just let them be, and *Diminish No One*.”

Sam left that evening thinking he may have just taken the hardest job of his life. And he hadn’t even started his work! As he exited the building via the plant/employee exit he had been shown, he noticed a large reader board over the door running the comment, *Diminish No One*. “How interesting,” he thought. “I guess they remind people of these things even after orientation.”



2

Make No Judgment About Other's Choices

Sam smiled to himself as he entered the “Employee Entrance” the next morning. Once again he had parked in an “Employee of the Year” space and was beginning to get the feeling there was another story there yet to be told.

The employee entrance came directly into the manufacturing area of the company, which struck Sam as odd. He would have assumed that there were other entrances to offices and the call center and the like, but he had been told this was where he should report from now on. As he walked through the door he was greeted by two people who introduced themselves as Ted and Jan. Ted asked how he felt about what he had learned the first day. Sam readily admitted that it was all a bit confusing. He did notice from watching television sitcoms the night before that an abundance of diminishing comments were used for humor. He prodded Ted about the fact that this seems to be a readily accepted cultural norm on television. Ted responded that what they were trying to accomplish at their company often contradicted what was going on elsewhere in the world. Jan added that it was not what everyone else is doing, but what they feel is the right thing to do. Both Ted and Jan launched into a short and compelling story about the success of their company, through innovation, sales and marketing, and their ability to deal with the daily problems that was unmatched in other organizations.

Sam was once again struck by how enthused these people were

about their work and their organization. He followed Jan and Ted through the plant and then burst out laughing when he noticed that each of the people in the plant had on silly socks, even Ted and Jan.

After his inquiring about this strange event, Ted apologized that Sam was not informed of silly sock day so he too could participate. *The Company Likes To Do Things To Make People Laugh*. Then to Sam's chagrin Ted pulled out the silliest pair of socks he had ever seen and handed them to Sam. The socks had different farm animals all over them and each animal had a name stenciled inside. Ted explained that they were a gift and he could keep them. The animals on the socks all had the names of the executives in the corporation. "Just in case you don't own silly socks, we wanted to be sure you were covered," piped in Jan.

They proceeded to the training room Sam had started in yesterday, and once again he was struck by the wonderful scents wafting through the building. Today's was peppermint. It made him smile and think of Christmas. Ted, noticing the smile, asked if it was because of the smell and Sam replied affirmatively. "We hope to *Stimulate Your Senses All Day* through smell, sound, visual effects and the occasionally odd thing. We hope they make you laugh, keep up your energy and help you enjoy your work day," offered Ted. At that point Ted lifted his pant leg to display his multi-striped socks in neon orange, yellow and green. Sam began to worry that no one was ever serious at this organization.

Jan then introduced the topic for the day, *Make No Judgment About Other People's Choices*. Ted and Jan then launched into a funny dialogue about two people meeting on the beach and articulating what each was thinking rather than saying. The first person was assessing the second's clothes and thinking such things as "how can anyone think that shirt and those pants go together?" "Where on earth did he get that terrible haircut, it is right out of the sixties!" "He really needs to cut those sideburns shorter." The second person in turn was mentally assessing the first with such thoughts as "What a weird way she walks and can you

believe she has on socks with her sandals on the beach?” “Why does she always choose to date such losers?” “She sure picks the wrong make-up for her face.” Sam was laughing more and more as they upped the mental conversations to criticism about speech, boyfriends, jobs, etc. Eventually Jan and Ted turned to Sam and asked him if he thought the mental dialogue was real. Sam replied that while it was exaggerated a bit, quite a lot of it seemed possible when two people meet. Jan and Ted both smiled and welcomed him to the real world. They explained that it is both natural and normal to have judgments about what others are wearing, doing and saying.

They then went on to explain that at their company the employees were attempting to mitigate the negative effects that judging may have on working with one another. The example Jan brought up was commuting. When someone cuts you off in traffic or does something equally dangerous we are quick to make a judgment about that person and the choice they have made. In making that judgment we then begin an internal process that is negative. We think they are bad, stupid, mean, crazy, offensive and more. Ted went on to explain that in that moment you can choose not to make a judgment about that person’s choice and thus change your negative reaction or forestall it completely. In doing this you create a different environment for yourself, for that person and for all those around you.

In the workplace this is most frequently seen in meetings and interactions about work. One person will bring in a report and others will immediately judge not only the report, but the layout, the research, the implications and so on. Jan pointed out that judgment versus analysis is at issue here. Were you to analyze what was done you may find that the research is flawed, which is different than judging the research itself. Sam felt that Jan and Ted were splitting hairs and said so. Jan and Ted smiled and indicated that they were indeed doing just that. However, in that fine line was the difference between *being able to hear and receive*

information for the good feedback that is in it and hearing and receiving information that is based on people perceiving the world differently than you do.

Jan suggested that they take a walk around the company to see this principle in action. Their first choice was the call center where they listened in on a complaining customer talking to an agent. The customer was ranting about the product they had received and the fact that it did not work as indicated. The responding agent spoke to the person in a calm, warm voice indicating they understood that what was happening was frustrating and that they would replace the product immediately at no charge to the customer. They closed the interaction by apologizing for the inconvenience and added that the customer would receive a coupon toward the purchase of future products for their trouble. The customer continued to harangue the agent until the final minutes, then finally agreed to receive the replacement and the gift. Sam was surprised to watch the agent take the next call with a smile in his voice and no signs of the conflict he had just been through.

Sam also noted that a few of the agents in the cubicles next to the agent handling the difficult call had stood up with hats on and blown bubbles toward him. One even flew over a small foam airplane.

Ted pointed out to Sam that the agent had been trained to make no judgment about the customer's choice to treat him rudely. The agent understood that the individual had a right to his behavior, and while he did not agree with it, he made no judgment about it, thus making the interaction easy for him. Jan explained that it is still difficult to take a call like that. So his co-workers were making him laugh and smile again to know that life was still good.

Sam spoke about how hard it would be for him not to judge someone who behaved so badly. "It is just what we do as human beings," he said. Jan and Ted agreed. They urged Sam to keep that thought as they moved to the next area of the company. A large meeting was taking

place and the leader was explaining that he had made a decision. The decision was to open an office in a town not well situated to get to and without many major services that might be needed. Participants in the room were questioning provisioning and travel costs relative to this choice. Sam watched in amazement while people prefaced their questions with, “I am not making a judgment about your choice. However, I need to understand why you think we can overcome this provisioning and transportation problem?” All the interactions were not only friendly, but exaggeratedly so. It was almost as if everyone was afraid to offend.

Sam asked about this, stating that confrontation and critiques were the essence of good business. Jan and Ted explained that that was an old norm they simply did not believe needed to be. Confrontation is a negative interaction, analysis and explanation are positive interactions, and that is what we are all about was their reply. Critiques are negatives, offering suggestions, adding on to what has already been said is positive. Asking for answers is positive, while stating that something doesn’t make sense is negative. We make no judgment about the choice. We do ask to understand how and why it transpired.

Ted continued. “Sometimes people are in a position to make choices that fit what works for them. In this case the facility manager had worked hard to find a good workforce and an inexpensive place to build the new office. He had weighed this against the provisioning and travel costs and found it to be the best alternative. While people questioned his choice, they made no judgment about it. They also made it their business to get the facts before they discussed it too freely among themselves.” Jan and Ted pointed out that their company was based on trust. Part of that trust was that this facility manager would not go out and do something without doing his homework first. It was also part of this whole process that if he had somehow managed to overlook something big in his decision, he would be able to reverse himself without an adverse affect on the company. This was another aspect of making no judgment. He would

not judge his own decision to be final until he gave his peers and other important persons, or all the people in the company, a chance to ask questions and help him make the best decision possible.

Sam, Jan and Ted headed out for lunch with Sam mulling through his head this odd concept. Finally he spoke up and asked why and how this came to be so important in the organization. Ted told him that their research of good places to work that turned a steady profit were almost always founded on this principle. It allowed people to enjoy freedom from worrying about whether their bow tie would keep them from getting a promotion, and freedom to understand that judging without the facts in a situation was what created a negative workplace. Companies and employees who want to enjoy their work and accomplish good things found this principle allowed them to question freely, and to remove the petty and devastating comments that often pervade the workplace. Jan asked Sam if he could imagine a workplace where people knew for sure that no one would judge their choices, but would instead insist upon a questioning dialogue until all was understood.

Jan then spoke up, “Be clear that outcomes must eventually be judged, however what we are proposing here is that you make no judgment about the path to get to that outcome. For example, people are different and often use different methods to achieve the same results. Someone may choose to drive from New York to Chicago, someone else fly and yet a third person takes the train. As long as they are there on time for what they need to attend to we should not judge their choice of transportation. In business too often a manager will decree how a project should be done versus allowing an employee to define their own method, which will still achieve an acceptable result. You probably know this as micromanagement. It is something we try hard to avoid using our ‘no judgment’ philosophy.”

During lunch Ted and Jan pointed around the restaurant and asked Sam if he was able to suspend judgment about some of the choices that

were being made by the people there. The woman who let her children run wild, the teen group that was talking louder than necessary, the gentleman that spoke into his cell phone like it was a speaker phone. All of these things are out of your control. Therefore, there is no reason for you to judge. It is their lives and their situation. Make your own a good one and ignore what others are doing. It only spoils your mood and ruins your clear thinking. Let them be.

Later in the day Jan and Ted sat with Sam and allowed him to ask more questions. Ted offered some further explanation on this subject via the author, Alan Cohen, and his book, “A Deep Breath of Life.” Ted pointed out that Alan discusses judgment versus discernment. In the book he states, “While we must not judge, we must discern. Judgment is distinguished by turbulent emotion and fear, while discernment is based on clarity and peace.” “And peace in our work is what we are after,” finished Jan.

Jan and Ted spent the afternoon walking Sam through several other meetings and interactions where Sam repeatedly saw people checking their judgment. It was after all a natural response, almost an ingrained response. What he saw when they checked themselves was smiles, questions, and exchanges that brought respect to every interaction. Sam was amazed, it really worked.

When Sam put this with what he had learned yesterday, *Diminish No One*, he could see how logically these two things fell into place. If I do not want to diminish you then I make no judgment about your choice. I do retain the right to ask questions with respect, and you will take this information into consideration to make the best decision possible. Wow! This could really be a fun way to work.

As Sam walked out the employee exit that evening he noticed the reader board running his lesson for the day. Were they doing this just for him or do they do this all the time? Either way the board read, “*Make No Judgement About Other Peoples Choices.*”