

## Labels Limit, Love Lifts!

Written by Administrator

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Many of us categorize life experiences as good or bad. We have so much going on in our lives that labeling an event or experience seems an expedient thing to do. However, this habit comes with some tradeoffs. Here's why we should be careful about labeling events without reflecting on them.

1. Labels limit our thinking. When you categorize an event as bad, you tend to associate it only with negative thoughts and feelings. The label limits your ability to reframe the event. It marginalizes sound thinking and settles the issue all too quickly. This, in turn, curtails your capacity to be creative, spontaneous, or willing to take a risk – even when one of these may be your best option.
2. Labels simplify things that shouldn't be simplified. When we call someone a jerk, a tightwad, a rich guy, a nerd, or a silver-spoon child, we label behavior without considering the whole person. We make up our minds about someone, attach a label, and take the relationship no further. The wonderful complexity of a human being is given short shrift when we describe him or her with short, limiting phrases.
3. Labels are non-thinking conclusions. They can be prejudices or misconstrued thinking that is simply false. All too often labels are 'stinking thinking'. They focus on negative impressions: "I'm a loser." "I'm no good." "She's a nag." "He's a jerk." Labels are often laced with unfounded and groundless assumptions that are given the power to guide your life. Imagine being driven by personal labels that misguide, misdirect, and allow us to mistake falsehood for truth. Labels are too easy. They don't demand touch minded thinking.

Keep your mind open by being label-free! Instead of putting labels on your experiences, choose to approach each experience with a mind that is open to different options, different ways of seeing things. Seeking first to understand is much easier when we avoid the habit of labeling.