

BREAKING FREE FROM COMPARISON

Galatians 6:4-5, 2 Corinthians 10:12

Ezekiel, Oghenekaro

¹² Oh, don't worry; we wouldn't dare say that we are as wonderful as these other men who tell you how important they are! But they are only comparing themselves with each other, using themselves as the standard of measurement. How ignorant!

2 Corinthians 10:12 (NLT)

Comparison seems to be the default of every part of our life. Think about it. How do you know when you have the best price on a car? You compare. How do you know, when are you pleased with the price of the cloth you want to buy? You compare. How do you know where you stand with God? You compare.

Comparison is a trait that plagues everyone, women, men, children. We find ourselves comparing our outward appearance, our abilities, our circumstances, and our dreams to those around us. We feel better when we are not the slowest, the heaviest, the least coordinated or the last picked. Our days can easily be consumed by creating an identity that displays an image that hides our insecurities, faults, and flaws. Comparison can be exhausting, because of its ability to steal our joy. Comparison's root is discontentment and fear. **Ephesians 6:12** reminds each of us that our struggle is not with our friend, family member, husband, etc. Our struggle is with evil that manifests itself in our lives through situations that involve these people.

The Impact of Comparison

"Stay in your own lane. Comparison kills creativity and joy." — Brené Brown

- **Feeling Inferior** - Have you ever felt like you are not good enough? Like you are constantly comparing yourself to others and coming up short? If so, you are not alone. Comparing ourselves to others is a natural human tendency, but it can have a negative impact on our self-esteem and happiness. Everyone compares themselves to others, and no one is immune from the destructive habit. Comparing ourselves to others highlight our shortcomings, making us realise we are not reaching our full potential.
- **Feeling Insufficient** - The dangers of comparison can lead to feelings of inadequacy, envy, and self-doubt because we feel we are not good enough or doing our best. It is impossible to compare ourselves to other people because we are complex individuals. For instance, if you compare your *introverted nature*

to your close friend, who is always the life of the party, it is not a correct comparison because you are looking at two opposing personality types. You are creating a distorted perception, where to be more accurate, being more sociable might involve attracting unwanted attention.

- **Feeling Insecure** – Comparison gives us the wrong impression that we are not perfect and may lead to depression and anxiety. When we direct our attention to what is wrong in our lives, it becomes our primary focus and the more time we dwell on it, the more we recognise our failures. We cannot consider how other components of our lives may be more beneficial, and this limited view does not do justice to the bigger picture. To put it differently, when you compare yourself to your sociable friend, you fail to consider all the positive attributes you have.

Making comparisons can be damaging, as we become focused on one attribute without seeing all of our other positive traits.

To make a fair comparison with other people, we need to consider each of our strengths and weaknesses and have them evaluated by an unbiased source.

The Inaccuracy of Comparison

"Comparison is the root of all feelings of inferiority. The moment you begin comparing yourself to others is the

moment you lose sight of your own greatness." — Robin Sharma

Can you see why comparing ourselves to others is difficult to measure? Assessing ourselves against other people is rooted in negative comparison, and there is no way of determining whether we are doing well in that area. So, how can we break free from the comparison trap? How can we find fulfilment in our lives without comparing ourselves to others?

To break free from the comparison trap requires focussing on our own journey, rather than on the lives of other people.

To make progress in an area of our life, we should look at what is not functioning properly and collaborate with a mentor, coach, or someone we trust to help us make improvements.

We are all on our own unique paths to success and fulfilment, and there are many ways to get there. **Don't compare yourself to others and don't be afraid to take risks and try new things.** Even though it may appear other people are doing well, they may be falling short in other areas. Comparison is a negative use of our time and energy that does not improve our life.

Breaking Free from the Trap of Comparison

Comparison can trigger its ugly cousins: jealousy, pride, discontentment, and self-pity. When comparison joins with our deep-seeded fear that we somehow do not have enough or would not be enough, these ungodly vices step out from the shadows. In other words, when

comparison leads us to the conclusion that somehow we have been misaligned or cheated, then we can be sure that we have crossed the line into unhealthy comparison, a form of self-sabotage.

So how do we keep our comparison skills focused on discernment instead of discontent?

- **Secure Our identity in Christ Deep in our Thoughts** - When we are fully confident in who we are in Christ—especially in the areas of feeling loved, worthy, and enough—it is much easier to avoid the trap of unhealthy comparison.

Neuroscience confirms that our brain subconsciously answers the question *“what do I need to do or become in order to be loved, worthy, or enough?”* Around the ages of nine to thirteen. These subconscious patterns are not necessarily logical or moral but come from the primal, survival side of the brain and are formed based on our experiences. For example, if we have learned at an early age that we are only worthy when we achieve or do well, we will subconsciously feel the need to continually compare ourselves to what we have decided it looks like to *“do well,”* instead of leaning on the truth that we are already worthy in Christ.

- **Take Responsibility for Our Thoughts and Choose to Retrain Comparison Thought Patterns** - As sinners saved by

grace, our minds will never be perfectly aligned with God's thoughts on this side of heaven (**Romans 7:25**). However, Scripture reminds us that we have been given the mind of Christ (**1 Corinthians 2:16**) and the Holy Spirit to guide our thoughts into truth (**John 14:17**).

Science and the Bible both confirm that first, every behaviour starts with a thought; and second, we have the ability to decide what thoughts our minds will focus on. Because our thoughts determine our beliefs and these beliefs create our actions and results, it is critical that we take responsibility for where we allow our thoughts and emotions to dwell.

- **Water Your Own Grass** - Instead of fixating on others' paths, focus on nurturing your own growth and development. Recognize that everyone's journey is unique, and success is subjective. Instead of constantly comparing yourself to others and wishing you had what they have, take a step back and focus on your own journey. Embrace the idea that success looks different for everyone and that your path may not look like anyone else's. By watering your own grass, you are investing in yourself and your own potential, rather than trying to keep up with someone else's pace.
- **Acceptance** - Acknowledge and accept where you are in life,

embracing both strengths and weaknesses. Understand that imperfection is part of the human experience, and it is okay to not have it all figured out. It is easy to get caught up in striving for perfection and feeling like you are never good enough. But the truth is, nobody has it all figured out, and we all have strengths and weaknesses. Instead of beating yourself up over your flaws, embrace them as part of what makes you unique. Accept where you are in your journey, knowing that growth and progress are ongoing processes.

- **Gratitude** – Cultivate gratitude for what you have rather than dwelling on what you lack. Take time to appreciate the blessings in your life, whether it's personal accomplishments, or simple pleasures. In a world that often encourages us to focus on what we do not have, practicing gratitude can be a powerful antidote. By shifting your focus to the positives in your life, you will find yourself feeling happier and more content.
- **Social Media Detox** – Take breaks from social media to avoid comparison triggers and regain perspective. Limit your exposure to curated high (doctored) light reels and remember that people often showcase their best moments online. Social media can be a breeding ground for comparison, as we are

bombarded with carefully curated images of other people's lives. Taking a step back from social media can help you regain perspective and focus on what truly matters in your own life. Set boundaries for yourself and limit your time spent scrolling through your feeds. Instead, use that time to engage in activities that bring you joy and fulfilment.

- **Focus on the Goal** – Remember that your current circumstances do not define your future potential. Stay focused on your goals and aspirations and take proactive steps towards realizing them. Set realistic expectations and celebrate progress, no matter how small. It is easy to get caught up in the present moment and feel like your current circumstances are all there is. But the truth is, you have the power to shape your own future.
- **Turn Comparison into Inspiration** – Use others' successes as inspiration rather than sources of envy or inadequacy. Instead of feeling threatened by someone else's achievements, view them as proof of what's possible and channel that energy into pursuing your own goals. When you see someone else achieving success, do not let it make you feel inferior. Instead, use it as motivation to push yourself further and reach for your own goals. Remember that success is not a finite resource, and there is

enough to go around for everyone.

as fuel to propel you forward towards even greater success.

- **Compare Yourself to Your Past** - Measure your progress based on personal growth and development rather than external benchmarks. Reflect on how far you have come and acknowledge the obstacles you have overcome along the way. Celebrate your achievements, no matter how small, and use them as motivation to keep moving forward. When measuring your success, do not compare yourself to others or external standards. Instead, look back on your own journey and recognize how much you have grown and evolved over time. Celebrate your achievements and use them
- **Tell a Better Story** – Reframe negative self-talk into empowering narratives that promote self-confidence and resilience. Challenge limiting beliefs and replace them with affirmations that reinforce your worth and potential. Cultivate a positive mindset that focuses on possibilities rather than limitations. The stories we tell ourselves have a powerful impact on our beliefs and behaviours. Instead of focusing on your shortcomings and failures, tell yourself a story of resilience and strength. Challenge negative thoughts and replace them with affirmations that uplift and empower you.

Conclusion

While social comparison is natural, its excessive practice can erode self-esteem and hinder personal growth. By cultivating self-awareness, practicing self-compassion, and focusing on personal development, individuals can break free from the comparison trap and cultivate a more fulfilling and authentic life. Remember, your journey is unique, and comparison robs you of the joy of embracing your own path. Take back your power, celebrate your successes, and cherish the journey toward becoming the best version of yourself – ***Galatians 6:4-5***.

References

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