ASSUMPTION STOPPER

"Confront yourself about prior assumptions being proven false"

Aside from mindfulness and gratitude, if there's any one topic interwoven among all others, it's the all-too-often overlooked error of making false assumptions. It certainly intersects with Perception, Earned Confidence and Winning the Battle Within as well as symptomatic of Mood Health and the importance of Prevention in Being a Life Athlete.

Here in Managing Energy, it impacts us both personally and interpersonally. And it will continue to rear its ugly head in topics yet explored. From poisoning our inner monologue to poisoning our interactions and relationships, the time has come to put assumptions where they belong: nowhere.

Let's begin with some self-reflection. Are you prone to making assumptions that cloud your thinking and self-perceptions? Let's say there was something you said to your boss and, for whatever reason, believe that it came off the wrong way. You may be telling yourself, "I sounded like an idiot." However, - in reality - instead of their somehow thinking less of you, that statement you made was actually well-received.

In fact, your boss is thinking, "Wow, they really know their stuff!" Our perception filters play tricks on us all the time.

Then there's what you say to yourself and don't ever realize it, or not until after you've beaten yourself down. That's often a habit in need of breaking. You've got to stop that self-assault. How can you accurately assess your actions among the noise and negativity from your assumptions and continuous subconscious self-abuse?

Constructive self-criticism has its place. Who, besides us, will help us improve ourselves? But, if you're anything less than 100 percent certain you did anything wrong, what's the point of putting yourself down about it?

Negating assumptions is very similar to applying Earned Confidence to eradicate worry and anxiety. By their very nature, assumptions are not certain to be true. So, just remain present and deal with the real.

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That brings us to interpersonal assumptions, especially when involving romantic relationships. Do you experience conflict with others that may be based more on assumptions than facts? If we reflect back to the Forgiveness Freer about how keeping scorecards are a "relationship killer," that's similar to when assumptions become a terminal illness. Most notable of all may be the feeling when you're telling the truth while being accused of lying or something you didn't do. The reason that's such a hot button is because that's when assumptions become interwoven with disrespect, distrust and contempt. It's also likely when that relationship becomes unrecoverable.

If that last paragraph is striking a negative chord - based on personal experiences - then now is the moment to pause, take that slow calming breath and think of something positive to offset that negativity. Once your reset is complete, kindly read on.

Let's take it down a slight notch and confront what we might call, "phantom arguments." This is too important to gloss over. For conversation purposes, let's say a couple is having a romantic evening out. One person's cell phone rings and they notice it's their sister calling to say hello. However, they want to respect the person they're with. Afterall, it's date night. So, they let the call go to voicemail. When the other person asks who it was, they say, "It's my sister, "I'll call her tomorrow." But, for whatever reason, the other person's insecurities and jealousy take over and they ask to see the phone or hear the voicemail to put them at ease. Chances are this date night doesn't end well. Which comes first, the insecurities, the assumptions or the mistrust? Enough said.

Assumptions are deceiving. They're subtler than worry. They're also less accessible than forgiveness. It any case, the best way to stop them – assuming you can pinpoint them as they arise – is to give yourself and/or the other person the benefit of any doubt. Then let it go and move on. Practicing doing this is like the Worry Stopper, Forgiveness Freer and Problem Preventer all rolled into one.

ACTIVITY 1: QUASH THAT ASSUMPTION! (TIME: 3-5 MINUTES)

Once you catch an assumption in action, evaluate it objectively and without emotion. Consider, is this something I absolutely know to be true? Is this something I can simply let go? Might this be something that needs further evaluation to confirm as truth and, if so, what is that? Also, if so, is it important enough to follow through and do? If you are incapable of being objective in that moment, then see if you can set it aside – like in an "Assumption Jar" and evaluate later how much credence to give it.

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ACTIVITY 2: ASSUMPTION 20/20 (TIME: 10 MINUTES)

In much the same way as something you worried about ended up never happening, you will – at some point – realize that you acted on an assumption that turned out to be false.

Call yourself out and hit the rewind button. It's important to confront whether you unnecessarily put yourself or others through some level of negative experience and interaction only for things to turn out differently than what you eventually realize were false assumptions and/or preventable events.

Think about it. How much energy did you expend based on any negative assumption? Was that your inner voice tormenting you? Did that assumption lead to an argument or significant error in judgment? What could you have done to have prevented that event from happening? How might you have given yourself or them the benefit of any doubts?

ACTIVITY 3: ASSUMPTION REACTOR (TIME: 10 MINUTES)

It's one thing to challenge yourself about false assumptions and entirely another when you find yourself the recipient of someone else's assumption. You *know* the truth or at least have a strong enough conviction about what you perceive to be the truth. How do you handle others' false assumptions in in the moment? In two words: Earned Confidence.

As noted, assumptions seep into many aspects of our experiences and encounters. So, you can make a safe assumption that they'll resurface as we continue on, particularly with the Conflict Resolver and Hater Handler. Just be sure to wait until we actually do them.

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