



The ACHIEVEMENT Journal

A Monthly Newsletter Featuring Bryan Dodge

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PERSONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

The 4th Of The 7 Promises;

“Promise That You Will Not Assume Anything.”

Never assume, always ask.” Over the years I’ve learned that asking prevents miscommunication, doubt, mistrust and conflict in relationships. Not only in relationships but also in work environments.

Are you aware that almost everything you tell yourself is an assumption?

Humans have a powerful imagination, very powerful, and there are so many ideas and stories that we can imagine. We listen to the symbols talking in our head. We start imagining what other people are doing, what they’re thinking, what they’re saying about us, and we dream things up in our imagination. We invent a whole story that’s only truth for us, but we believe it. One assumption leads to another assumption; we jump to conclusions, and we take our story very personally. Then we blame other people and start gossiping to try to justify our assumptions. Of course, by gossiping, a distorted message becomes even more distorted. Almost all our conflicts are based on this, and it’s easy to understand why.

So, what is an assumption?

An assumption is an opinion we form about a particular situation, an issue, or persons. Assumptions are based on our past experiences; we subconsciously project our past experiences onto a particular issue. We often jump to conclusions based on these assumptions and inevitably it leads to an emotional drama of some sort. The emotional tug of war can be with another person, it can be with us and our mind.

The emotional tug of war can be draining and at times it can ruin relationships, create disagreements and ill feelings between people. Assumptions are frequently the source of most communication problems. "Oh, I thought you knew what I meant..."

Why do we fall into that trap? Why is it that instead of being direct and asking a question, we end up assuming something automatically. An assumption can be something as simple as if you don't get a phone call back from someone or if you don't get an email back from someone, you tend to find rationales, reasons for that. Assumptions can also be that if a person is quiet/doesn't talk much, introverted, they are either narcissistic, aloof, or just unfriendly.

Assumptions are reflections of the way we view ourselves—if we assume someone may not want to talk to us, or someone wants something from us, it's really a form of rejecting ourselves. If we assume that the reason someone acted in a particular way was because they wanted to hurt us, or they wanted to attack us, or they wanted to have some form of control over us, it's really how we feel about ourselves. We need to look at ourselves honestly and see—how do we view ourselves? Are we insecure about certain things? Explore what our insecurities are and be honest with ourselves about it.

Also, if we learn not to make assumptions, we learn to accept other people more—we understand others better and let them be who they are. We learn that it's not about changing them—that if we change our reaction to them, in time, we may not feel the same issues or uncomfortable feelings that we may feel with each other.

Assumptions Made In your Personal Life Can lead To Undesirable Outcomes.

Have you ever tried to explain something so seemingly simple to someone and they just don't understand it no matter what?

It can be frustrating, sure. But chances are you assumed they knew more about the topic than they did.

The right approach would've been to ask a few questions beforehand to gauge your audience's level of knowledge on the topic. Then give your explanation, shaping the conversation around their knowledge. By assuming that they know more than they do about the topic, your messaging comes out condescending which ends up as the urban dictionary puts it, making an? (out of) u.(and) me.

Don't assume people know what you mean. Don't fall into the curse of knowledge and assume people know as much as you do about a topic. And definitely don't assume what you say will be understood the same way in a different context. If you're not careful with assumptions, you might end up in way more drama and confusion than you've ever hoped for.

Humans have a need to explain and justify everything; we have a need for knowledge, and we make assumptions to fulfill our need to know. We don't care whether the knowledge is true or not. Truth or fiction, we believe 100 percent in what we believe, and we go on believing it, because just having knowledge makes us feel safe. There are so many things that the mind cannot explain; we have all these questions that need answers. But instead of asking questions when we don't know something, we make all sorts of assumptions. If we just ask questions, we won't have to make assumptions. It's always better to ask and be clear.

Stop Making Assumptions in The Workplace

Project your company values as personal values.

- Your company's core values define what the company believes in and, thus, how employees are expected to behave. This applies to leadership and employees alike.
- Analyze yourself and your behavior. It can take some gut-level honesty to do this, but you must really get honest with yourself, perhaps uncomfortably so.
- What are your tendencies, biases and preferences? Question your own mindset. Identify where your own thoughts and behaviors align. Remember: you're identifying your deficiencies so you can work to overcome them.

Think of your perception of reality like prescription glasses. They are lenses through which you see the world clearly. Chances are, that prescription is unique to you and won't work for other people. How they see the world is distinct, requiring a different prescription to correct their vision. When you approach a situation, remind yourself that your perspective is unique. Because it's unique, it's just one of many diverse points of view. Talk to those involved in the situation you're addressing, and truly listen to their answers. Then dig further by asking open-ended questions. Absorb their knowledge, and let it challenge your preconceived notions. Once you feel like you hear their point, seek confirmation that your understanding of what they're saying is accurate. By opening your mind to diverse, and at times conflicting, perspectives, you'll be better equipped to craft creative and comprehensive solutions to any challenges that arise.

If we don't make assumptions, we can focus our attention on the truth, not on what we think is the truth. Then we see life the way it is, not the way we want to see it. When we don't believe our own assumptions, the power of our belief that we invested in them returns to us. And when we recover all the energy that we invested in making assumptions, we can use that energy to live your best life.

**“Asking is the
best weapon
used against
Assuming”**

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