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Effective Communication

Module 2 - Part 1

When I speak with new clients, especially married couples, communication is the number one component of interest than any other relationship part. I put it as second only to loving yourself first (which is why I designed this class to reflect that importance. I remember when my husband Jim and I had our first disagreement. We were so passionate about our own position within the disagreement that we totally missed the main point of the argument, what we were arguing about. When we finally gave ourselves a chance, we realized we were fighting for the same thing. How crazy is that! The fact that men and women for the most part think differently so therefore communicate differently, we need to do something about this challenge. And if that wasn't challenging enough with the seemingly battle of the sexes in communication, within all of our perceptions, we all see things differently and that has nothing to do with gender!

What makes communication effective is when we all understand that we all communicate differently and to just accept that as a fact. If you accept this as fact, you'll be more compassionate and understanding when you get a response that is much different than what you expected. So here is your first lesson to be learned and will help you tremendously, assume the best. That's it, assume the best instead of the popular idea of assuming the worst in people. If you assume the best, you are already listening in the possibility or positive attitude. My husband owned and operated a very popular and world-class restaurant in California's Silicon Valley. He started

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the idea of assuming the best so that his kitchen staff and dining room staff found the right attitude to work better together under high pressure moments. Even though the staff got the lesson, his business partner didn't see the value of that belief. When one of the waiters arrived late on a busy evening, this was pre-cell phone, Jim's partner jumped all over this tardy waiter. So rather than be concerned that he was missing and hope he was safe. He jumped all over him while he was trying to collect his thoughts knowing he was late to work on a busy dining evening. By the end of the shift, the upset waiter came up to me to apologize for his lateness. He began to explain that on the way over, a driver had clipped his car while he was legally entering the intersection. The man was having a heart attack and our waiter stayed with him until the ambulance arrived. Of course Jim's business partner overheard the apology and was embarrassed for his behavior but by that time, the damage was done. If the belief of "assume the best" was followed, Jim's partner would have been happy to see the tardy waiter and helped him get on the floor quicker to help him, the staff and especially the customers. Assume the best is the best belief within any relationship, working or personal, to assure you a positive environment for everyone involved.

When I would come home later than expected. I'll call to let Jim know that I'm on my way. The first thing that he asks is "Are you okay?" rather than, "where are you and why are you coming home so late?"

Because we lead with "assume the best" attitude, our focus is first, are you safe, then, what can I do for you?

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How many people lead with “assume the worst” and end up in conflict in their relationships. This applies for married couples, developing couples, brand new couples and even business relationships.

Jim's business partner could have benefited greatly from this knowledge. In fact, because of Jim's partner's insensitivity towards his tardy waiter, he created a divide between the restaurant leadership and the front of the house staff. That led to a drop in production and attitude from that part of the business. Oh, and remember that waiter who arrived late for service because he was waiting for emergency services to treat that heart attack victim? Well he left his position at Jim's restaurant because trust was broken between him and the owner of the restaurant. Can you blame him? He just had an impact experience that affected him deeply, plus he was responsible enough to care that this accident made him late for his job, only to be told the obvious by the top leader of this restaurant that he was late on a busy evening. What kind of person publicly scolds an employee, who before this tartiness had always been early for his shift and open to be called in to work at a moments notice, without hearing their side of the story first? Well one who will continue to lose employees if he doesn't begin to assume the best from his staff, that's who.

So assume the best is the first step to open and transparent communication in all types of relationships including the ones within your life too. Oh, and remember, the belief of assuming the best swings both ways. You can't expect other people to assume the best if you don't practice that first yourself. Don't wait for other people to adapt this understanding only to then adapt it yourself. Be proactive and practice

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assuming the best from your perspective first. You'll be pleasantly surprised how everything changes around you once you've changed first.