

What Else Could It Mean?



“When someone behaves in a way that is disagreeable to you, before you jump to the wrong conclusion, ask yourself, ‘What else could it mean?’” How many times have you been guilty of jumping to the wrong conclusion because you did not clearly examine all the facts? But rather, you accepted the first answer your mind provided. Here’s a side note, we must remember that the way we process and filter information is based upon our own experiences and view of the world. So, what does this mean? Our view is distorted. Therefore, it’s important to obtain pertinent information before reaching a conclusion.

As human beings, nearly all of us have a tendency to want to be right. Consequently, we will examine a situation; reach a conclusion; and then accept it as truth without considering all the facts. Clearly, reviewing the facts about a situation can help shed some light on our “perceived” truth.

On many occasions, we have been guilty of accepting the surface answers we give ourselves without testing the answer for accuracy. This thinking can be especially destructive within relationships. If we are engaging in a cycle of jumping to conclusions, rather than getting to the truth or “heart” of the matter, we will build relationships based on lies. Can you envision how this could erode relationships over time?

It’s important to understand, that each of us have a different belief system, consequently we see, hear, filter and process information differently. Additionally, we each have different biases and prejudices based on our experiences. To help you develop the discipline of asking yourself, *“What else could it mean?”* please consider the following:

1. Engage in active listening

Listen with the intent to understand and hear; not to offer your opinion or rebuttal. Active listening requires that you repeat back or paraphrase to the individual what you heard them say. This technique helps to improve communication as it conveys to the person that you were listening and that you care about what they have to say. Furthermore, the individual is assured that the message was received as it was intended.

2. Gather additional information

Do you remember the saying, *"There's more to this than meets the eye."* Oftentimes, there is much more going on in a situation than what is being communicated or what can be assessed on the surface. Consequently, before reaching a conclusion, we must act responsibly in gathering and reviewing as much information as possible before drawing a conclusion and/or making a decision.

3. Conclude objectively

Leave your personal feelings, biases and prejudices out of the equation. Now, this can be easier said than done. However, one can exercise objectivity with practice. The more you focus on the facts, the easier it will be for you to be objective.

Let me give you two examples of how easy it can be for us to jump to the wrong conclusions, because we do not take out the time to ask ourselves, *"What else could it mean?"*

1. Your female manager is often cantankerous and belligerent. She rarely socializes with members of her team or upper management in and outside of work. The conclusion drawn is that she's mean, unfriendly and does not know how to effectively interact with or manage people. Have you asked yourself, *"What else could it mean?"* Well, after repeated complaints, her manager sits down with her and learns that she has been in a physically abusive marriage for 5 years. She has been unaware of how her pain and fear is being manifested at work. Because she is unable to beat on him, she beats on other people with her attitude and words.

2. A husband has been despondent for the past 3 months. Whenever his wife asks him what's wrong, he responds, *"I'm fine. It's nothing you have done. I am just dealing with some issues at work."* The wife concludes that her husband no longer loves her and has lost interest in her. *"Maybe he's having an affair,"* she says. Have you asked yourself *"What else could it mean?"* Maybe it means that 4 months ago he began experiencing sharp pains in his head and dismissed them as headaches due to work related stress. Well, while at work one day the pain was so bad, his manager suggested that he go to the emergency room. After several tests and x-rays the doctors concluded that he has an advanced stage of brain cancer with 6-9 months to live. He has been struggling with dying and how to tell his wife and kids. Furthermore, his life insurance policy has lapsed and due to his pre-existing condition, he is unable to obtain a new policy.

From these two examples, can you see how easy it is for us to jump to the wrong conclusion? ASPIRE TO GREATNESS is about living, doing, being and thinking on a higher level. To walk in our greatness, we must better manage our relationships and exercise responsibility in asking ourselves, *"What else could it mean?"*

Thank you for reading this article. Please feel free to leave a comment. I would love to know your thoughts. Remember, sharing is caring 😊 .

Have a FANSPIRING day!

Always Aspiring,
Rosalynd