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Introduction

I've been noticing something lately, and I think it's high time we chatted about it. It's all about this pesky little habit we all have – making assumptions.

Now, what exactly is an assumption? Well, in the simplest terms, it's when we believe something to be true without having any concrete evidence to back it up.

It's like your buddy saying he's going to be late and you immediately thinking he's stuck in traffic. But did he say he was stuck in traffic? Nope, that's your brain doing a little dance and jumping to a conclusion all on its own.

So, why do we make assumptions? Well, it's a sneaky shortcut our brains use to make sense of the world quicker. Instead of gathering all the facts, we fill in the blanks with our own ideas or experiences. Kinda like an auto-fill feature on your keyboard, but in your mind.

Now here's the kicker: these assumptions can cause a real mess. You know, misunderstandings, hurt feelings, you name it. So, how do we stop our brains from hitting the fast-forward button and making these assumptions?

Well, it's all about swapping out assuming for something else: clarifying. Sounds fancy, huh? But it's actually pretty simple.

Here's the deal. When you find yourself assuming something, take a step back. Ask yourself, "Do I know this for sure?" If the answer is no, then it's time to do some digging. Ask questions, seek out the real information, and don't be afraid to say, "Hey, I'm not sure I understand, can you explain a bit more?"

It's like switching from autopilot to manual control. Sure, it might take a little extra time, but trust me, it'll save you a whole heap of trouble down the line. And the best part? The more you do it, the easier it gets.

So, let's start breaking down those assumptions and getting curious about the world around us. And remember, it's okay not to know everything straight away – asking for clarity is not a weakness, it's a superpower.

Here's to less assuming and more understanding!

What's clarification?

So, let's talk about this thing called **clarification**. Imagine you're staring at a foggy window, and clarification is like taking a squeegee to it. You wipe away the fog, and voila, you can see clearly through the glass. In a nutshell, that's what we're doing with clarification – we're making things crystal clear, easier to get, easier to understand.

Now, why do we want to do this? Well, there's a few biggies here:

1. **Dodging the Misunderstanding Minefield:** Let's say someone's talking to you, and you're not quite picking up what they're putting down. You clarify to make sure you're both singing the same song. It's about avoiding those "Oh, THAT'S what you meant!" moments.
2. **Boosting Your Comprehension Power:** Clarifying's not just about avoiding mix-ups; it's also about truly getting what the other person's saying. The better you understand their point, the better you can respond, and the more productive your conversation becomes.

3. Making Communication a Breeze: When everyone's on the same page, conversations flow like a smooth jazz number. No awkward pauses or offbeat tangents, just harmonious dialogue.

**So, how do you know when you've hit the clarification bullseye?
Here's a quick checklist for you:**

- 1. You're Feeling Super Confident:** It's like a lightbulb moment – you just “get it”. No more head-scratching or furrowed brows, just clear understanding.
- 2. The Other Person's Giving You the Thumbs Up:** They confirm that you're on the money with your interpretation.
- 3. The Fog's Cleared, and the Sun's Shining:** The conversation keeps going without any hiccups or stumbles because you both know what's what.
- 4. The Path Forward is Clear:** If there are any action steps to take based upon the conversation. You've verbalized your understanding of what action each of you is to take based upon your clear understanding of the desired outcomes.

So there you have it, folks! That's the gist on clarification. Remember, it's all about wiping away the fog and making sure everyone's playing the same tune. Happy clarifying!

WORKSHEET: FROM ASSUMPTIONS TO CLARITY

Part 1: Understanding Assumptions

1. **Define "Assumption":** Write down your understanding of what an assumption is.

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2. **Examples of Assumptions:** List three examples of assumptions you've made in the past week.

1.	
2.	
3.	

Part 2: The Impact of Assumptions

1. **Consequences:** For each example above, write down what happened as a result of making that assumption.

1.	
2.	
3.	

2. **Reflection:** Reflect on how these assumptions may have influenced your actions or feelings.

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Part 3: Embracing Clarification

1. **Define "Clarification":** Write down your understanding of what clarification is.

2. **Potential Clarifying Questions:** For each of the assumptions you listed earlier, write down one or more questions you could have asked to gain clarity.

Here are examples of clarifying questions in different contexts:

Personal Conversations:

"When you say you're upset, can you help me understand what specifically is making you feel this way?"

"I heard you mention that you're feeling overwhelmed. Is there something in particular that's causing this?"

Workplace Discussions:

"You mentioned that the project scope has changed. Could you provide more details on what's different now?"

"You've asked for a 'comprehensive' report. Can we discuss what specific elements you'd like me to include?"

Educational Settings:

"When you say 'study more efficiently,' do you mean you're looking for study strategies or better time management?"

"You mentioned I need to improve my essay structure. Could you tell me specifically which part of the structure needs work?"

Conflict Resolution:

"You've mentioned that you felt disrespected. Can you explain what I did that made you feel that way?"

"When you say that I wasn't listening, do you mean that I didn't understand what you said, or that I wasn't paying attention?"

Remember, the goal of clarifying questions is to encourage the other person to provide more detail or explain their thoughts or feelings more fully. This way, you can ensure that you understand their perspective and avoid making incorrect assumptions.

Part 4: From Theory to Practice

1. **Scenarios:** List three potential scenarios where you might make an assumption (These can be hypothetical or based on past experiences).

1.	
2.	
3.	

2. **Plan:** For each scenario, write down the steps you can take to seek clarification instead of making an assumption. Remember to include potential clarifying questions.

1.	
2.	
3.	

Part 5: Reflection and Goals

1. **Barriers to Clarification:** What might make it difficult for you to seek clarification instead of making assumptions?

How can you overcome these barriers?

2. **Goal Setting:** Set a goal for the next week. This could be "I will ask for clarification in at least two situations where I usually make an assumption."

3. **Check-In:** Plan a time next week to review your goal. Write down what you did well and what you want to improve.

Remember: This is a process and it's okay to make mistakes along the way. The goal is to become more aware of when you're making assumptions and to practice seeking clarity. Happy exploring!

A favor

Lastly, if there is anything I can do to make this lesson better - please ask me. The better these lessons are, the better the results you'll experience.

Thanks for being you,

Brian R. King

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