

DON'T BE AN **ASS**-UMERWHAT YOU THINK  
YOU KNOW IS  
PROBABLY WRONG

**A** few months ago, I attended a business networking event where everyone had a chance to tell about their business. I noted three people with whom I wanted to talk with further. After the meeting I made it my mission to connect with each one of them. I saw one heading for the door, so I caught up with her before she left. All the while keeping my eye on the other two, so that I didn't miss making contact with them.

As I finished speaking with the first, I met the next person also as he was leaving. In turn, because I was stationed by the door, I was able to connect with the third as she was leaving too. All in all, I spent about 20-30 minutes conversing with them during which time many people walked past us to exit.

Having completed my mission, I headed back into the room to locate the person I came with. As I got back to the middle of the room, a man whom I'd seen a number of times at the group, but had never spoken with before, came up to me and angrily stated, "You don't like me do you?"

I was stunned; I hardly even knew him. Dumbfounded, all I could say was, "Huh?"

He then brusquely walked off. The host of the meeting was within earshot, so I looked at him and said, "Do you know what that was all about?"

He replied that he thought the man was trying to get my attention, but because I was so absorbed in my three conversations, he thought I was ignoring him.

I felt bad that he felt ignored, but I was so intent on meeting those people that I never even noticed him. He assumed that I intentionally disregarded him; and then he assumed that I must not like him.

I don't want to assume, but it seems like his own self-worth issues clouded his

thinking. I made a mental note to reach out to him at the next meeting.

Several years ago, I received an email from a businessman, who asked if I would coach him for an upcoming speech he had to give. I replied that I was available, and that we should connect by phone as soon as possible to set up a schedule. Many days passed and I received neither an email or a phone call from him; so, I phoned him. I got his answering service, so I left him a voicemail. Again, I received no reply, so after a few more days I sent him another email.

When I didn't hear from him, I assumed that he was no longer interested, and that he didn't have the courtesy to let me know. From there my mind went to the dark side, and I assumed the worst: that I wasn't good enough; that he found someone better than me. This time it was me who was projecting my self-worth fears onto a situation that didn't warrant it.

A few weeks later, he called me and apologized for not getting back to me sooner. He explained that a family crisis had taken all his time and attention. We then set up a coaching schedule. Through my negative assumptions, I had beaten myself up over nothing.

Just this weekend, I observed a heated exchange of messages within a Wine Tasting MeetUp group to which I belong. One fellow posted a message to the proprietor of the group asking if he could schedule more tastings for after 5 p.m. Suddenly there was a flurry of messages attacking this man for his provincial ways, and how it was appropriate to drink at any time of day. Dozens of people made the assumption that he was being moralistic about the time of day people ought to consume alcohol. He later replied that he really enjoyed the tastings, but because of

his work schedule couldn't attend any unless they were after 5 p.m.

It's almost comical to see online arguments flare up on Facebook as people make assumptions about the meaning of another person's posts. Lately I noticed several people posting memes on Facebook with a variation of this statement: Don't assume my posts are about you. However, if you're offended, then it must mean you're guilty of something.

Don't assume you know the meaning or motivation of another's actions. If you find yourself hurt or angry from an assumption, then you are giving into something you fear. And, that is your issue. Now is the time to examine your fear and deal directly with it. Believe me, the person you're making an assumption about hasn't a clue what you're thinking either.

We've all heard the saying: "When you 'assume,' you make as 'ass' of 'u' and 'me.'" Rather than make an assumption, try to communicate further. If you need clarification, ask. Just don't kick your own ass over it.

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