

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

105. Relationship Hack: Assume the Best in Others

You are listening to episode 105 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast, titled Relationship Hack: Assume the Best in Others. Welcome to the podcast today! I'm glad you're here. Do you and I naturally assume people have good intentions or do we lean towards assuming they have not-so-good ones? Do we assume the best in others or do we assume the worst? We're discussing this in today's episode, and if you're anything like me, sometimes I could use a reminder every now and then on how to keep the relationships in my life healthy and growing. I think we'll find that reminder today. Hang with me here for this next short while, and together we'll find help and hope for our real lives today. Let's get to it.

In my monthly email to those in my email community last week, I shared how last month someone's words directed to me stung as I read them. This person came at me with firey, unkind words, and attacked my character and professionalism. Oh, this wasn't the first time this has happened, but it was the first with this person. I can never quite prepare myself for instances like this, and I don't think I'll ever enjoy such an encounter.

After reading the gut-wrenching words, a familiar saying came to my mind. "Hurting people hurt people." And they do. I've lived on this earth long enough to understand the truth of that statement. So I reminded myself how this person much be hurting right now, and threw up a quick prayer on this one's behalf.

But after that, I got to thinking. We as a generalized population are sometimes quick to assume the worst in others, aren't we? We often jump to a quick conclusion of someone's bad intention towards us. You and I can see this often on social media. Why is that?

Why do we often assume the worst in others, instead of the best?

Is it just our culture right now?

Is it because that's what's we see in others and that's what's familiar?

Could it be because maybe we're one hurting ones and we unintentionally turn around and hurt others with our assumptions and our words?

Maybe it's a combination of any of these. I don't know. But we see it all the time. At least I do.

I recently noticed someone sharing their experiences online and in return they received harsh words regarding what they shared. On Facebook last week I read comments of a post that degraded and humiliated someone who was simply trying to offer another encouragement. On our annual bicycle ride across Iowa two weeks ago I overheard someone talk negatively about another behind that person's back.

This discourages my heart to witness such hurtful actions toward others.

I say the cycle stops here.

I say we can be the ones to end such negativity and hurtfulness. We can be the ones to make a change. We can be the change we want to see in this world and in our relationships. And we can treat others as we want to be treated and we can choose to believe the best in others and not the worst.

This is what our Scriptures come to teach: in everything, in every circumstance, do to others as you would have them do to you. Matthew 7:12 VOICE

Because in all reality, this is one of the best relationship hacks we can apply. Repeat after me:

I will assume the best in others, not the worst.

If this person who texted me the unkind words would have assumed the best in me, it would have alleviated a lot of heartache and trouble. Not just for me but for this person as well. But because this one didn't do that, I kindly responded with truth of what he/she didn't know or couldn't see. It may have looked differently than what was true, but assuming the worst made everything worse. In the end, this person felt terrible for the words and the misunderstanding, and apologized profusely. This was a lesson for both of us.

To assume the best in others and not the worst.

The enemy of our souls will do all he can to pit us against each other and to divide us. He doesn't want us to have healthy, thriving relationships. He wants us to hate each other, to be against each other, and to destroy each other. After all John 10:10 (NIV) reminds us that the thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy. And when we assume the worst in others, we allow him space to do just that. To steal, kill, and destroy our relationships. I don't know about you, but I'm tired of him having any foothold in any of my relationships with others. I want to do all I can to preserve and protect my relationships. You likely desire that as well, right?

So how do we assume the best in others?

What can we do?

First off, we can pray. This is always my answer to most everything. Even when I don't do it perfectly or don't remember to do it right away. Praying is the key to assuming the best in others. Because it's likely we might continually revert to assuming the worst. Maybe that's just our nature, but we don't have to obey our nature. We can choose to obey God. And God will never direct us to assume the worst in anyone. Ever. He will always guide us to assume the best in others. So before we jump to conclusions, let's pray and ask Him to direct our thoughts.

Second, we can adjust our thinking. We can choose to think kind, uplifting, encouraging thoughts about the person we may be questioning. It's amazing what changing our thoughts can do. On our own we may not be able to do that so well, but after praying, we have God's influence and strength to do so. Let's think better thoughts of those around us.

Third, we can act in kindness. If we feel we need to address the situation with another, we can choose to do it through empathy and kindness, while assuming the best in him/her. We can use grace-filled words and words that God would have us use. (Another good reason to go to God first.) And if we're led to not

say anything at all and to not address the situation, we can continue to act in kindness and believe the best.

Assuming the best in others is another way to show love, compassion, and grace.

And that's exactly what God show us. Aren't you so glad He does?

The thing is, when God teaches us a lesson, He will give us opportunities to apply that lesson. So the next time we are tempted to assume the worst in someone and not the best, I pray we are ready to respond in the ways Jesus would want us to. To pray first, to adjust our thinking, and to act in kindness. I pray we can be the people who truly live out the Matthew 7:12 scripture of doing to others as we would want them to do to us. The change may not happen overnight, but the more we live this out and model this kind of behavior, the more others will notice and respond in similar ways.

We can pray a simple prayer daily. "Lord, help me to assume the best in others today, and not the worst." What a difference this can make!

We're taking this conversation over to our private Encouragement for Real Life Community on Facebook. Join us over there to be encouraged and inspired.

If you found encouragement and hope in this episode, would you please rate it and/or review if from wherever you listening today? This helps others find this encouragement too. Be sure to subscribe to the podcast so you never miss a new episode.

And if you'd like to be a part of my email community where I share the inside scoop and encouragement I don't share anywhere else, plus have the opportunity to win a gift from me each month, then click on the Free Resources link in the show notes. Because you'll also receive access to my exclusive encouragement resources.

Let's be about treating others the way we want to be treated this week by assuming the best in them. I'm so glad we get to journey through this life together. Thanks for being here! God bless you.

Links in this episode:

[Matthew 7:12](#) VOICE

[John 10:10](#) NIV

[Encouragement for Real Life Community](#)

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