

Assumption versus Clarification

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It is a mercy from ALLAH that we humans are gifted with a mind that is able to think. Thoughts may be factual or hypothetical – based on actual facts or merely imagined, and based on feelings.

Assumption is the act of accepting something as true, or as certain to happen, without proof.

Clarification is the act of seeking facts or proof to support a thought or hypothesis.

One of the main reasons why relationships break down in today's society is that we don't communicate with clarity. Instead, assumptions have become the norm of our dysfunctional family units.

A classic example of assumption in this age of smartphones would be where the blue ticks on *Whatsapp* may be assumed as "message read", when in fact, this may not always be the case. Furthermore, if there is no response to the message, the sender would, most often, assume that the recipient is "ignoring the message". It is no wonder we are living on edge with our emotions and are quick to judge others.

How to seek clarification

Reflect on the last few days of your life and make a list of things you have assumed about people or situations, without having any real proof. Now, reflect on how each of these assumptions has panned out for you.

For example, in my own life, a couple of years ago I felt extreme pain in my left abdominal area. Immediately, I assumed the worst diagnosis. There was no proof, yet, there was a toxic, addictive yearning from me to gravitate towards a negative outcome.

I now know that it was based on my fears of a past medical condition. I had assumed that it was recurring. The only way to douse those fears was to seek clarification from my GP. Blood tests and scans later indicated that my fears and assumptions were baseless.

The important thing to remember is that when we assume, what we are actually doing is creating a "false story" and choosing to believe in it as though it were true. The repercussions of believing in this false story may cost us our peace of mind, damage relationships and even cause ailments in the body and mind.

The only solution is to seek clarification. Not only that, but seek clarification tactfully to ensure you don't impose your fears and insecurities on another.

Notice the scenario below:

Husband forgets to take his phone with him. He has been gone all day. Wife tries to reach him. His phone vibrates silently by the bedside table. Wife doesn't notice the phone there. She assumes he is ignoring her calls. She lets this thought catapult to numerous unpleasant assumptions about her husband. Eventually, husband returns in the evening. He walks in with a smile, however, the wife begins showering accusations at him. He finds it difficult to comprehend her words. Finally, he realises he left his phone at home. He tells her about it. She chooses to ignore him because she is too worked up to see things rationally. She chooses to remain grumpy the whole evening.

The above scenario could easily have been handled differently had the wife tactfully sought clarification from her husband. All it required was for her to let him know that she had tried calling him all day and became concerned when there was no answer. Was everything alright? Simple. The act of seeking clarification not only opens and deepens our communication channels but also opens the mind to exercise patience – one of the most important virtues that ALLAH commands us to practise. In the above scenario, the amount of time spent on negative assumptions and later accusations could have instead been spent on exercising patience and making duaa for the safe return of her husband.

“When you assume, you make an ass of you (u) and me” – What may seem like a cliched adage tends to hold immense truth.

Resist assumptions, instead seek clarifications.