

## Life Group Preparation Notes:

### Emotionally Healthy Relationships

#### Session 2 - Stop Mind Reading and Clarify Expectations

##### In preparation for Life Group:

**Watch Vimeo:** Session 2. Watch the session at home in preparation for life group.

<https://vimeo.com/332668944> (Password for vimeo link: EdgeChurch). Make notes as you watch. Share one phrase that impacted you most from the video in group time.

##### Stop Mind Reading:

- The purpose: To clarify what another person is thinking instead of making assumptions.
- Key principle: Never assume you know what a person is thinking or feeling?
- How you can stop mind reading:
  1. Ask permission to read his/her mind.
  2. Say, "I think you think....Is that correct?"

##### Clarify Expectations:

- Like the Stop the Mind Reading skill, Clarify Expectations is about eliminating confusion, pain and disappointment in relationships.
- The purpose: To recognize whether certain expectations are valid or not, and to clarify our expectations with others.
- Expectations come from many sources: families, cultures, social media, TV, the internet, fairy tales, billboards, schools, etc
- **The Problem with Many of Our Expectations:**
  1. **Unconscious:** We have expectations of others that we don't even know we have. We often don't know we have the expectation until we are disappointed.
  2. **Unrealistic:** We have expectations that are not reasonable.
  3. **Unspoken:** We're conscious of them, and they may be realistic, but they are not spoken.
  4. **Un-agreed Upon:** We have expectations of others that they did not agree to, or others have expectations of us that we did not agree to.
- **Confusion around expectations exists in:**
  - Workplace
  - Homes and families
  - Neighbourhoods
  - Churches
- **The Million-Dollar Question**
  - What expectations do we have a right to have and what expectations do we not have a right to have? In other words, what is a valid expectation and what is an invalid expectation?

- Sometimes we don't even know we have an expectation until we become angry or disappointed.
- What makes an expectation valid? Valid expectations are (use as a check-list):
  1. **Conscious:** I am aware of my expectation.
  2. **Realistic:** This means there is evidence to support that the expectation is reasonable. Either it has been done in the past or the person has the capacity and willingness to do it.
  3. **Spoken:** I have expressed the expectation clearly.
  4. **Agreed Upon:** the other person has agreed to the expectation by saying "yes".
- **Checklist to clarify expectations in your own mind:**
  - **Conscious:** Were you aware you had this expectation?
  - **Realistic:** Is this expectation reasonable? Why? Or Why not? What is the specific evidence that this person (of these people) can, or will, do this? For example, you're your holiday with your family each year is always filled with tension, what has changed so that this year might be different? If your close friends do not normally send you a birthday card, what has changed this year so that you can realistically expect a different outcome?
  - **Spoken:** Have you clearly spoken the expectations, or do you just think the other person should know?
  - **Agreed Upon:** Has the other person agreed to the expectations?

### **Group Time:**

**Worship:** Suggested song is "No Longer Slaves" By Bethel Worship. Listen to the words of the song and pray back to God a phrase that stands out to you.

**Pray:** Take 2 minutes of silence to "be still and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10. Then pray prayers of thanks for His presence.

**Check-in:** Share a recent unmet expectation you had of someone (e.g. your phone call, text or email was not returned). What story did you tell yourself about the person?

**Purpose:** To learn how to prevent misunderstandings in our relationships.

**Key Principle:** An expectation is only valid when it is mutually agreed upon.

**Introduction:** "The ninth commandment reads: "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour" (Exodus 20:16). Every time we make an assumption about someone who has hurt or disappointed us, without confirming it, we believe a lie about this person in our head. Because we have not checked it out with him or her, it is very possible that we are believing something untrue. It is also likely that we will pass that false assumption around to others.

When we leave reality for a mental creation of our own doing (hidden assumption), we create a counterfeit world. When we do this, it can properly be said that we exclude God from our lives because God does not exist outside of reality and truth. In doing so we wreck relationships by creating endless confusion and conflict. The Bible has much to say about not taking on the role of judge to others (Matthew 7:1-5).

The application of these two simple skills - Stop Mind Reading and Clarify Expectations - holds within it the key to preventing large-scale misunderstanding in your friendships, family, workplace, and church. These skills provide practical help for loving others well by eliminating untold numbers of conflicts in our relationships.”

**Bible Study:** Proverbs 18:2, 18:13, 18:15, 18:17

**Group Discussion:**

1. Based on the first three proverbs listed above, what are the differences between a fool and wise person with a discerning heart?
2. Briefly share a specific situation when what you were thinking or feeling about someone was untrue, or you misinterpreted the behaviour of another person without checking it out. What did you end up believing incorrectly until you heard the whole story (see Proverbs 18:17)?
3. Consider the different relationship areas of your life - work, church, family. Pick one area where you might be “mind reading” or making an assumption.  
Write down the person’s name and assumption you have. Share the assumption you have without the details or person’s name. (remember no advice giving or comments)
4. Think of a recent, simple expectation you had that went unmet and made you angry, disappointed, or confused. Write it down and share the example with the group.
5. How does the checklist shed light on this expectation? (See checklist above in notes).
6. What is an expectation someone might have of you that needs clarification? Share with the group what your next steps might be.

**Check-out and prayer:**

What one single decision can you make towards taking a first step to slow down your life and spend more time focused on God and healthy relationships?

Pray that back to God.

**Application:**

- Where else in your life might you have expectations, or be making assumptions of others, that you need to clarify - in your workplace, school, family or friendships?
- Decide when you will practice this skill before the next session with the person you paired up with at Session 1.
- Write your response to the following questions in your journal:
- I plan on practicing the Stop Mind Reading and Clarify Expectation skills:
  - With whom? \_\_\_\_\_
  - When? \_\_\_\_\_
- Print these notes and add to your file. Bring your file to life group each week.

**Others:**

Watch for opportunities to share with others an aspect that has been meaningful to you from this session.

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