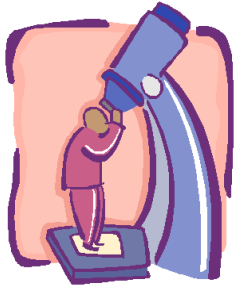


Being Honest With Yourself - Part III

By Abby Anderson, MS, LPC, CEAP



We've all heard the phrase "Seeing is believing" to indicate that we must see something for ourselves to believe that it is true, that we'll believe only our own eyes. But there is another way to look at this saying and that is "Believing is seeing". That is to say, that if I expect to see something I will be looking at everything through that filter and so will interpret what I see with that expectation.

We often go through the world viewing it with unchallenged assumptions such as everyone views the world the same way we do, and interpreting others behaviors based on what it would mean if we behaved that way, assuming they are just like us. Meeting someone for the first time and interpreting their silence as arrogance, leads us to interpret subsequent behaviors in that light. It may be that if we probe further, we may discover that the individual is simply shy and reserved. However, once we begin to treat someone as if they are arrogant, it sets in motion a reaction on their part which may reinforce our original belief, especially since we are looking for verification. If we are not aware of our bias and assumption, we can be making choices and decisions based on faulty information. This is going to get in the way of self honesty.

If we believe, without self examination or questioning, that a path that we are going to take is the best and only one to take, we may be setting ourselves up for problems down the road and missing opportunities for different experiences. Working on self honesty opens the door for discovering new aspects of and strengths about ourselves we might otherwise overlook. Questioning and looking for alternative views leads us to broaden who we are.

Next week we'll look at ways that self honesty leads to better communication.
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