

GUIDES FOR LIVING CONNECTED

THE ASSUMPTION TRAP: A 3 PART SERIES

PART 2: CATCHING THE STORY IN THE MOMENT



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WHEN THIS IS USEFUL

This guide is especially helpful when:

- You realize you overreact only after the moment has passed
- You feel emotionally hijacked in conversations
- You struggle to slow down once you're activated
- You want to respond differently but don't know how
- You think, "I don't even know what happened — I just snapped"

KEY CONCEPTS

Emotional Intensity as a Signal

Strong emotions often mean a story is running.

Internal Awareness

Noticing thoughts before acting on them.

Name It to Tame It

Labeling your experience reduces reactivity.

A GENTLE NOTE

Sometimes a small exercise opens up something deeper. That's not a sign you're doing it wrong — it's often a sign there's more to understand or discover. If this feels connected to something deeper, support from a therapist can help.

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THE MAIN IDEA

Most people don't react to events.

They react to meanings.

And those meanings usually show up first as:

- thoughts
- interpretations
- assumptions
- internal narratives

The moment you can say:

"This is the story my mind is telling..."

You create a small but powerful gap between:

- what happened and
- how you're interpreting it

That gap is where choice lives.

Without that gap, your nervous system tends to run the show.

SOMETHING TO TRY

This is a simple internal check-in you can use anytime you feel emotionally activated.

Step 1: Notice the Story

When you feel a strong reaction, gently ask:

"What am I assuming right now?"

Try to put it into a sentence:

- "They don't care about me."

- "They're annoyed with me."

- "I'm not important."

This isn't about deciding if it's true yet.

Just name the story.

Step 2: Name the Feeling

Then ask:

"If this story were true, what would I be feeling?"

Common answers:

hurt, anxious, rejected, angry, insecure

This step matters because feelings are often more accurate than interpretations.

A SMALL SHIFT THAT MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE

Instead of:

"They're being cold."

Try:

"I'm having the thought that they're being cold, and I feel hurt."

That one sentence:

- slows your nervous system
- creates psychological distance
- brings you back into the present moment

You're no longer inside the story.

You're observing it.

RECAP

- Emotional reactions usually start with interpretations
- Noticing the story creates psychological space
- Naming thoughts and feelings reduces reactivity
- Awareness gives you more choice in how you respond

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