

What the “Bleep” Would You Know About That?!

It's possible I was the recipient of someone's "outside voice" at a party this past weekend. Or maybe she is simply one of those rare (and totally awesome) people who says exactly what is on her mind. I was having a lovely chat with the hostess and one of her guests when the conversation steered towards my coaching business and the hostess was curious about who it is that I gear my practice to. I said that it seems people who are drawn to me are women entrepreneurs searching for life's Holy Trifecta...a booming business, a happy marriage, and a healthy body. Her guest immediately shot out "and what the *bleep* would you know about that?!" As I was recovering from a little shock and trying to find my words she continued to say that with "your body, your nice husband, and your successful business" I couldn't possibly know what it would feel like to struggle in these areas.

Oh darling. Been there, done it, got the t-shirt. I hesitated to respond but then figured someone who has the cojones to ask the question deserves an honest answer. I answered simply that I had survived cancer, my marriage reached a do or die stage when our son was young, and in the early years my business had been on the brink of bankruptcy several times so I did kind of get it. She seemed satisfied.

The truth about coaching is that I actually don't have to have been totally in your shoes to help you but what piqued my curiosity more was why this person thought I couldn't know anything about these struggles. While I currently enjoy pretty good health, I love my husband more than ever, and my retail and coaching businesses are doing well...it has certainly not come without struggles, and work, and struggles. I feel like I speak quite openly about what I've been thru in my life but I must admit this isn't the first time I've heard this from someone. And I'm guessing a few of you have had people make judgements on your life that are completely wrong. So, how do we get people to really see us and not misjudge our lives or what we've been thru? And in turn, how do we learn to really see others?

Be seen

While my first response to this woman at the party was to fake a martini-olive choking emergency I told her the truth instead. I felt a little vulnerable in the moment but then a cool thing happened, she immediately softened and any walls that were up came down. I'm not suggesting you walk around with your story tattooed on your forehead but when the moment arises...don't let it pass. Share. We want to see you.

Assume there's a story

We've all heard the line about "assuming" that it makes an Ass out of U and Me. We assume all sorts of things about others...that their life is perfect, that they have loads of money, that they are lazy, that they are a raving bitch, that they have a million friends, that their kids are angels, that their kids are demons...sorry, I could kind of go on and on here. Bottom line, we don't know squat! And until you do I might suggest you assume there's a story. I'll use The Urban Rack as an example; we will sometimes have a customer come in the store that from appearances does not seem to be having a fabulous day. She might be a little irritated and short with the staff and no matter what we can't seem to make her happy. This is that moment where we can get all "assume-y" but instead I urge my staff to think of this woman's story. What might be happening in her life right now? Did she get some bad news today? Remember...bottom line, we don't know squat!

Ask the real questions

Like my party friend, ask the real question (maybe omit the F bomb. Or not.). We have so many opportunities to learn more about the women (and men) in our lives but we often revert to small talk. Hey, I love a good "what not to wear" chat as much as the next gal but at some point we need to dig a little deeper. It's especially important to dive into these questions with the people we tend to have assumptions about. This is where the juice is. So, the next time you're at a party and you find yourself sitting with the same people maybe take the opportunity to saddle over to that person you feel you might have a judgment about (c'mon you know who she is..that rich, skinny, perfect, etc, etc...) and learn her real story.