

The “Obviously” Rule – is it really obvious?

Relationships can be tricky.

Every relationship, from the one with your parents, your siblings and your friends to those with your teachers and employers.



A major point to consider in your interaction with anyone else in any context is that there are two sides to it.

You are thinking and feeling something that cause you to say X.

Because the other person is thinking and feeling something different, when you say X they hear Y.

Let me give you an example.

I really want to go to the beach because X will be there and I really fancy them.

My friend knows that I fancy X and that they will be at the beach.

‘Let’s go to the beach.’ I say.

So I’m thinking that my friend knows X will be there and will want to do whatever’s necessary to support me.

Having said ‘Let’s go to the beach.’ my friend replies ‘I’d rather go into town for a coffee. Let’s try that new place!’

I’m really upset. She’s not the good friend that I thought she was. She has no consideration for me and is selfish.

I don’t say this of course I just think it and I reluctantly go to the coffee shop feeling all bitter and twisted towards her.

I am seeing what she said through my thoughts and feelings. I’m thinking that X will be at the beach and my friend will support me and want to go there. She then says ‘Let’s go for coffee’.

I’m disappointed.

Why did she say to go for a coffee and not the beach?

Naturally she said that because she’s selfish and doesn’t care about me.

Really? Is that why she said it?

Go now to my friend's thoughts and feelings:

She thinks: My friend fancies X who I know will be at the beach. I just heard that X will be at the beach with their new partner.

She feels: I don't want my friend to be upset at that.

She says: 'Let's go for coffee instead'. She is intending to break the bad news to me gently there.

She's not being selfish, she has a good intention. She is acting on different information to me and therefore the best course of action is different.

Incorrect assumptions were made on my part.

This bad feeling could have been avoided if I'd communicated properly with her.



Let's
talk

'Let's go to the beach'

'No let's go for coffee'

'But X will be at the beach'

'.....I'm really sorry but I just heard they've got hooked up'

Lots of wailing possibly but no bad feeling between me and my friend.

A good tool in your armoury for relationships is the 'Obviously' rule

In this example, when my friend said to go for coffee, I felt that 'obviously' she didn't care about me at all.

This was an assumption on my part, not based on any facts.

Think about this scenario the next time you find yourself thinking negatively about someone.

Is your conclusion 'obvious' or might they have a reason for what they said or did?

If in doubt, ask them.

Communication is the key to a good relationship

This applies to every relationship whether personal or work-related.

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