

IGNORANCE

“**Ignorance** is of a peculiar nature; once dispelled, it is impossible to reestablish it. It is not originally a thing of itself, but is only the absence of knowledge; and though man may be kept ignorant, he cannot be made ignorant.” - Thomas Paine

THINGS TO DO WITH IGNORANCE

1. Turn Raw Ignorance into Understanding
2. Challenge your expectations on knowledge (for yourself and others)
3. Step back and observe miscommunications/ misunderstandings
4. Observe yourself: Watch your brain develop perceptions and snap judgments

START WITH YOURSELF How often do you decide what someone else “should have done”, even though you don’t know them or the circumstances around their decision. How often do you anticipate a motive for someone else? How often do you create a negative backstory for someone you don’t agree with based on nothing but your imagination? We all do it daily because our brains are designed to fill in the blanks. Spend some time this week observing how your own ignorance can set you up for miscommunication. This can facilitate an incredible emotional release for repressed anger - especially towards people who aren’t available to apologize, physically or emotionally.

DEEP THOUGHTS

Try to imagine **everything** that there is to know in the world... Then ask yourself what

percentage of **everything** there is to know do YOU personally know? Notice how this number gets smaller every time you let your thoughts wander through the vastness of our collective information.



OUR RAW MATERIAL

REMEMBER that each person you encounter has a small percentage of the collective knowledge, just like you. And just like you, that knowledge is deeply rooted and tested in personal experience and study, even though that person may stand for things you wouldn’t dream of supporting or believing. Let your mind wander on that this week and see where it takes your thoughts in regards to expectations on the behavior of others.

NATURALLY NEUTRAL Ignorance is simply a lack of knowledge on a given subject, not an indication of intelligence or lack thereof. Ignorance holds no intention, and is best treated as an opportunity for education, not for shame or blame. Studying ignorance can teach us to handle difficult situations by seeking or offering compassion around miscommunication and misunderstanding- moving stunted exchanges to the next level.

AS HUMAN BEINGS, we often assume that our perceptions “should be” everyone’s reality, forgetting that each person’s perceptions come from its own unique set of circumstances. Getting to know ourselves is a complicated mission since we are constantly shifting and changing. Holding judgments for/against other people really points to our own ignorance, or our inability to remember that on some level, we are all connected. Treating ignorance with respect is an approach that helps take defensiveness out of the equation and sets up the best chance for a favorable outcome wherever possible. As we know better, we are able to do better.