DAY 26

When Good Intentions Are Misunderstood

When Caring Intentions Are Misunderstood

Today's Diary at a Glance

In Day 26, Kimberly reflects on the tender disconnect that happens when genuine concern, love, and support are misunderstood by the people she cares about most. Recognizing how her neurodivergence shapes her directness, serious tone, and solution-oriented thinking, she notes that questions meant to express care can sometimes be heard as criticism, worry, or disapproval. Especially with family and loved ones like her mother, she wants to offer help, yet realizes people often need patient presence rather than immediate fixing. Kimberly emphasizes that she does not need to apologize for caring or withdraw emotionally to avoid confusion. Instead, she embraces clarifying her heart with simple words, asking what support others truly desire, and allowing communication misunderstandings to become gentle invitations for deeper mutual understanding.

Key Life Lesson

Differences in communication styles, personal histories, and emotional needs mean that expressions of concern, assistance, or direct questions can sometimes be perceived as criticism or doubt. These disconnects do not signify bad intentions or a lack of love on either side of a relationship. By offering gentle clarification and asking what kind of support another person truly desires, we can bridge misunderstandings and nurture stronger, more compassionate connections.

Spiritual Reflection

James 1:19 (KJV)

Kimberly reflects on James 1:19, recognizing that loving well often calls her to be swift to hear and slow to speak rather than rushing to solve every challenge. She seeks God's wisdom to temper her caring heart with gentle patience, discovering that compassionate listening can be just as powerful an expression of love as taking action.

Moment of Grace

Extend gentle grace to yourself whenever your deep concern or thoughtful gestures are mistaken for anger or judgment. You do not have to apologize for loving sincerely, nor must you withdraw your kindness simply because bridging different communication styles takes time and practice.

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Today's Self-Reflection

1. Have you ever expressed concern for someone only to discover that they thought you were upset? Perhaps you asked a question because you cared, but the person heard criticism. Perhaps you offered assistance, and the other person interpreted it as interference. Or perhaps your serious expression caused someone to misunderstand what you were feeling.
2. Consider how you communicate care to the people in your life. Do your words and tone reflect what you are actually feeling?
3. Do you give others room to explain how they prefer to receive support? And are you willing to clarify your intentions when a misunderstanding occurs?
4. Today, remember that genuine care does not always look or sound the same from one person to another. Sometimes understanding begins with a simple explanation. "I'm not upset. I'm asking because you matter to me."

My Journal

1. If you wish, write about a time when your sincere attempt to help or check on someone was misunderstood, and gently explore what clarifying words might have brought ease to that moment.
2. If you wish, reflect on the different ways you prefer to receive care, noting how asking loved ones what form of support they desire might soften future conversations.

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Prayer & Application

Prayer prompt: If prayer is part of your practice, invite God to grant you patience, discernment, and gentle words as you seek to support those you love. May you find peace in knowing your loving heart is seen, even as you learn to listen deeply before offering solutions.

Practical takeaway: Before offering advice or a solution to someone you care about, pause and gently ask, “Would you like my thoughts, or would you prefer that I just listen?”

Reading Circle Discussion

1. How do your own communication style, facial expressions, or natural problem-solving tendencies sometimes influence how your care is received by others?
2. What are some gentle phrases or clarifying statements that have helped you prevent or navigate misunderstandings when checking in on family and friends?
3. Reflecting on James 1:19 and the call to be swift to hear and slow to speak, how might practicing compassionate listening change the way you show up for those you love?

Your written responses belong to you. You may leave any prompt unanswered and decide whether to share anything in a group.

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Read the complete chapter in your published book.

The Diary of a Neurodivergent Black Woman

30 Days of Faith, Identity, Healing, and Becoming · Kimberly J. Lewis, M.Div.

This companion includes manuscript-based summaries, the original questions in Today’s Self-Reflection, and newly developed companion exercises. Scripture reference: James 1:19 (KJV). Source: Approved manuscript · Day 26 · pages 194–201.

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