DAY 22

Taking You at Your Word

Trust, Clarity, and Spoken Words

Today's Diary at a Glance

In Day 22, Kimberly explores the profound challenge of taking people at their word when unspoken expectations, casual promises, and indirect language govern communication. Throughout her personal and professional life, she approached statements with sincere literalness, believing commitments like "I love you" or workplace instructions were definite and dependable. When actions failed to align with promises or workplace metrics shifted without explanation, Kimberly often absorbed the blame, assuming she was deficient for missing subtle cues or unwritten rules. Embracing her neurodivergence brought clarity, helping her recognize that processing language directly does not diminish intelligence. She learns that asking questions is not a weakness but an invitation to shared understanding, allowing discernment and consistency to accompany her enduring devotion to honest, compassionate communication.

Key Life Lesson

Communication often hinges on unstated social cues, meaning two people can hear identical words while arriving at entirely different interpretations. For those who process language literally, explicit clarity is essential rather than an indicator of limited capability or care. Trust flourishes best when communication is treated as a shared responsibility where questions are welcomed, expectations are stated plainly, and changes are openly acknowledged.

Spiritual Reflection

Matthew 5:37 (KJV)

Reflecting on Matthew 5:37, Kimberly values the call to truthful, plainspoken integrity while recognizing that living with integrity also requires wisdom, listening, and discernment. She seeks to honor truth without defaulting to suspicion, understanding that seeking clarification can exist alongside compassionate grace.

Moment of Grace

Give yourself permission to release the self-blame you carried when you took people at their word and were met with shifting realities or unspoken expectations. Your sincerity and desire for honesty are not flaws, and you are fully allowed to ask for clarity while letting actions demonstrate what words truly mean.

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Today's Self-Reflection

1. Have you ever believed someone meant exactly what they said, only to discover that their words carried a different meaning? Perhaps someone promised support but did not follow through. Perhaps you misunderstood sarcasm or an indirect expression. Perhaps you followed instructions carefully and later discovered that additional expectations had never been communicated. Or perhaps you have spent years feeling confused by the difference between what people say and what they do.
2. Consider how you approach communication. Do you feel comfortable asking for clarification?
3. Do you expect others to understand what you mean without explaining it?
4. Have you ever interpreted someone's questions as resistance when they were simply trying to understand?
5. And have you considered how your communication style may differ from someone else's?

My Journal

1. If you wish, reflect on a time when you took someone's words literally and later experienced confusion or disappointment, writing about what clarity you needed in that moment.
2. If you wish, write down a few gentle questions you can practice asking when you need to confirm whether your understanding matches what another person intends.

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Prayer & Application

Prayer prompt: If prayer is part of your practice, bring your past misunderstandings and hurt over broken words before God, asking for gentle discernment and peace. Pray for the courage to speak plainly and the freedom to ask for clarity without fear or self-condemnation.

Practical takeaway: When an instruction or statement feels ambiguous today, pause and gently ask for clarification—such as, “I understood your words this way; is that what you intended?”—rather than trying to guess the unspoken meaning.

Reading Circle Discussion

1. How has navigating unspoken social cues or shifting expectations impacted your ability to trust what people say in relationships or at work?
2. What makes it difficult to ask for explicit clarification when a conversation feels ambiguous or when words seem disconnected from actions?
3. In Matthew 5:37, we are invited to let our communication be straightforward and true; how can we practice truthful integrity while also extending grace and discernment to those who communicate differently?

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: Matthew 5:37 (KJV). Source: Approved manuscript · Day 22 · pages 149–162.