



*Life is complicated. People are complicated.
Let's figure it out together.*

WHAT DO I KNOW VS. WHAT AM I ASSUMING?

A practical reflection tool for sorting facts from stories before you decide what comes next.

*Less guessing. More clarity. Your brain has enough tabs open
already.*



Honestly,

Sometimes the hardest part of a confusing moment is not what happened. It is the story our brain starts writing before we have all the information.

We notice a delayed reply, a strange tone, or a decision we did not expect—and suddenly we are assigning motives, predicting outcomes, and rehearsing a conversation that has not happened. Our brains do love a head start. They are just not always working with complete information.

I made this tool for that moment. It is not here to talk you out of your instincts or convince you that everything is fine. It is here to help you separate what you know from what you are assuming, make room for another reasonable explanation, and decide what you still need to understand.

You may finish and discover your first instinct was right. You may also realize there is more to the story. Either way, you will be responding from clarity instead of reacting to a conclusion you have not checked.

Take a breath. Start with what is real. Then stay curious long enough to ask one useful question.

Colleen ♥

WHAT DO I KNOW VS. WHAT AM I ASSUMING?

A practical clarity tool for slowing down the story in your head before it becomes the whole truth.

WHY THIS TOOL MATTERS

Curiosity protects us from certainty.

When something feels confusing, disappointing, or personal, our brains are very good at filling in the blanks. We notice a fact, attach a meaning to it, and then react as though the meaning has already been proven.

That does not make you dramatic, friend. It makes you human.

Your brain may also be freelancing.

The problem is that an assumption can quickly start doing the work of a fact. We begin preparing for motives we have not confirmed, arguments that have not happened, and conclusions we may not actually believe once we slow down.

This tool is not asking you to ignore your instincts. It is asking you to separate three things:

- What you directly observed
- What you are interpreting or assuming
- What you still need to understand

Use it before a difficult conversation, before sending a message, or anytime you notice yourself becoming very certain about what another person meant.

A helpful question to borrow: *"Can you help me understand what happened from your point of view?"*

HOW TO USE IT

Start with the most specific version of what happened. Write only what you directly saw, heard, received, or experienced—without adding what you think it meant. Then write the meaning your brain attached to it. Finally, name the question that would help you check the assumption.

WHAT DO I KNOW VS. WHAT AM I ASSUMING?

Begin with one specific situation. Write what happened, then separate what you know from what you may be assuming.

THE SITUATION

What happened? Keep it brief and specific.

WHAT I KNOW

What did I directly see, hear, receive, or experience?

- ---
- ---
- ---

WHAT I AM ASSUMING

What meaning, motive, prediction, or conclusion am I adding?

Curiosity is not weakness. Editing your brain's first draft is allowed.

- ---
- ---
- ---

WHAT DO I KNOW VS. WHAT AM I ASSUMING?

Test the story, name what you still need to understand, and choose the next useful move.

WHAT ELSE COULD BE TRUE?

List at least two other reasonable explanations. They do not have to be correct. They only need to be possible.

Your first explanation is allowed to be a draft.

- 1.
- 2.

WHAT DO I NEED TO UNDERSTAND?

What question would help me replace guessing with information?

THE CONVERSATION STARTER

Choose one or write your own.

If your voice shakes, it still counts.

- ☐ "Can you help me understand what happened?"
- ☐ "I may be filling in some blanks, so I want to check my understanding."
- ☐ "Here is what I noticed. Can you tell me how you see it?"
- ☐ "Would you walk me through it from your point of view?"

My own words:

WHAT DO I KNOW VS. WHAT AM I ASSUMING?

Check your thinking, then choose one useful next move. You do not have to solve everything before you take one honest step.

FINAL CHECK

- ☐ I separated facts from interpretation.
- ☐ I identified at least one question instead of one conclusion.
- ☐ I am ready to be curious without abandoning what I know.

Small is still a move, bestie.

MY NEXT USEFUL MOVE

What is one thoughtful action I can take next?

Need a place to start? Borrow one if it fits:

- Ask one clarifying question.
- Choose a calmer time to talk.
- Gather one missing fact.
- Write a draft and wait before sending.
- Ask someone qualified for help when the situation needs more than a conversation.

WHAT DO I KNOW VS. WHAT AM I ASSUMING?

Before you go, friend, tuck this one away. You do not need perfect certainty. You only need enough clarity for one honest next step.

POCKET REMINDER

Facts first. Curiosity next. One useful question. One honest move.

WORDS TO BORROW

For a fact check: *"Here is what I noticed. Can you help me understand what happened?"*

For a story check: *"I may be filling in some blanks, and I want to check my understanding."*

For a pause: *"I want to respond to what I know, so I am going to give this a little time before I decide what it means."*

MY OWN WORDS

A quick note: This tool is for reflection and general guidance. It is not legal, medical, mental-health, crisis, safety, or workplace advice for a specific situation. If safety, coercion, retaliation, health, or legal rights are involved, reach out to someone qualified to help.

*Look at you: less guessing, more clarity, and one useful move.
Your brain can take the rest of the afternoon off from filling in
blanks.*

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