

Level Up

GUIDE



SESSION SUMMARY:

In this leadership lesson, John Barrett addresses the detrimental impact of the "assumption gap" on teamwork and organizational culture. He explains that when there is a lack of knowledge or understanding between team members, people tend to fill this void with their own narratives, which can lead to misunderstandings and conflict. Barrett emphasizes the importance of closing this gap by adopting the approach of a journalist rather than a novelist—asking questions and seeking to understand rather than making up stories. By doing so, leaders can foster a culture of open communication, accountability, and effective teamwork, which is essential for organizational success.

GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. Can you recall a time when an assumption gap caused a misunderstanding in your personal or professional life?
2. How do you typically react when you lack information about a situation—do you fill in the gaps with positive or negative narratives?
3. What are some practical steps we can take to avoid making assumptions about others' intentions?
4. How can we encourage a culture of open communication in our teams and organizations?
5. What role does humility play in closing the assumption gap?
6. How can we balance giving others the benefit of the doubt with addressing real issues that need attention?
7. In what ways can we be more like journalists, seeking to understand before being understood?
8. How can we hold ourselves and others accountable to the commitment of closing the assumption gap?

APPLICATION:

This week, challenge yourself to be more mindful of the assumption gap in your interactions. When faced with a lack of understanding, take the initiative to ask clarifying questions and seek the truth rather than filling in the blanks with your own story. Encourage others to do the same and notice the impact it has on your communication and relationships.