

What's Your Story?

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Have you ever been misunderstood or judged unfairly? Has something ever been said about you that isn't entirely true? Very few people have the luxury of answering these questions with a "No".

I've got a relative who has always been known to have a questionable and undesirable lifestyle. I had heard all the stories that circulated in the family circle and often wondered to myself how could someone live so recklessly.

Sometime ago, I ran into this relative and immediately the old stories I'd heard surfaced in my mind. However, instead of greeting him with shallow pleasantries, I gave him a big hug and told him that I was glad to see him. Somehow, that seemed to break the tension that we both felt and he began to candidly tell me about his life. As I listened to him talk, I looked

into his eyes and realized there was a different story. HIS version had not been told.

At that moment I realized how easy it is to stand in judgment of another based upon hearsay. The truth is we don't always know THEIR real story and others don't always know ours. It's not hard to act as the judge and jury based on speculation and gossip. Oftentimes, there are unknown factors that may be contributing to the way a person is behaving.

Life itself is a teacher of many lessons we don't soon forget. Being more aware of unmerited judgment is one of those lessons I learned. Whatever your story is, remember that compassion outweighs criticism and goes a lot further in bridging the gap of misunderstanding and mending the torn fabric of miscommunication.

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