

Letting Go of Interrupting

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Today's Truth

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to get angry (James 1:19, NLT).

Friend to Friend

Three-year old Mateo Beltran really wanted some cupcakes and his mother said no.

Unfortunately, he did not like her answer. In a viral video on social media, little Mateo is better known as the little boy who says, "Listen Linda" over and over again. While little Mateo's interruptions were funny in the video, regularly interrupting others is no laughing matter.

Do you tend to be a "Listen Linda"? Here are two ways that we can use interrupting as a control-loving behavior:

- When we cut someone off while they are talking.
- When we interfere in an other's affairs.

Chances are that you're like me and you don't mean to interrupt others. In fact, you truly believe that what you are saying or doing will add something better to whatever is going on. For instance, when someone is telling a story and I interrupt to add my words, it's because I want to add to the laughter and fun in the moment. If my kids are telling me about a problem and I jump in they before they done talking, it's because I want to hurry them along toward solving their problem so that we both feel less stress.

Did you notice that the letter "I" begins the word interrupting? That is so telling! My interruptions often revealed a desire to push a self-centered priority of "me" over the precious relational connection of "we." Some of the roots of interrupting behavior include insecurity (a fear of not being seen or heard), pride (valuing self over others) or fear of loss (trying to prevent embarrassment or a bad outcome)

In Luke 10, Martha welcomes Jesus and the disciples into her home. With a crowd of hungry men, chances are Martha was feeling some serious stress and pressure to be hospitable to her guests. However, she was upset with her sister, Mary, for not jumping in and helping. In fact, Martha goes to Jesus and asks him to interrupt Mary and make her do what Martha wants.

Jesus' response to Martha: "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it and it will not be taken from her (Luke 10:42)."

Martha wanted to interrupt Mary's agenda because Martha believed that her own agenda was more important in that moment. Jesus isn't angry when he corrects Martha, but he lets her know that in that moment, Mary was doing exactly what was right for her and he wasn't going to interrupt Mary for Martha's sake.

Letting go of interrupting means stepping back in the moment and taking the focus off of ourselves before we push our agenda, our words or our demands on others. God allows you the space to pursue the life that you want to live. Give others that gift as well.

Do you tend to interrupt others with your words or interfere with what someone is doing because you don't like how they are doing it? If you struggle with this, you aren't alone! I do, too! Our first step is to admit it and ask for God's help to let go of this control-loving behavior. Then, here's some practical Spirit-driven next steps on how to let go of interrupting from Today's Truth in James 1:19:

1. Quick to listen – Ask God to help you to use your ears before you open your mouth.
2. Slow to speak – Make sure that your words don't dominate your conversations or undermine someone else's actions.
3. Slow to get angry – Practice humility and take the focus off of your feelings or the drive to get what you want.

Let's Pray

Dear God, I can quickly get wrapped up into my excitement, agitation or agenda and push it on others. Lord, help me to take the focus off of myself and keep it on loving others in a way that honors You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Now It's Your Turn

- Consider Jesus' response to Martha about leaving Mary alone to make her own choices. How is letting go of interrupting or interfering a powerful act of faith and trust in God?
- Today's Truth in James 1:19 offers several action steps. Which one(s) can you work on applying to your life today?