

## Trainer Tip: The Gift of Understanding with Mary Mackenzie

*It is well to give when asked, but it is better to give unasked, through understanding.*  
—Kahlil Gibran

All people long for understanding. It is such an easy thing to give, yet rarely do we see its importance in creating peace of mind. Consider a situation in which you have just heard that your boyfriend is dating one of your friends. You call another friend to tell her about it and she says, “You must be feeling so hurt because you’d like to trust that your friends will be honest with you.” When someone simply reflects our feelings and needs without aggravating the situation, we feel instant relief because they “got” us. I’d rather be “got” than to have people commiserate with me. Commiseration can sound like: “Oh my! I can’t believe this. How utterly insensitive and thoughtless of both of them. What a betrayal!” This can sound supportive, but it plays into the problem and stimulates more pain. On the other hand, when we offer understanding to another person, *we receive the gift of connection*. Everyone wins.

**Today, be aware of your desire to commiserate and see if you can turn it into an opportunity to empathize with another person.**

This trainer tip is an excerpt from Mary Mackenzie's book [Peaceful Living, available from Puddledancer Press](#).