

Do you need to be right?

*"It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so."*  
— Mark Twain

Take a moment and reflect on your relationships at work, at home and at play and ask yourself, "How much does the 'I'm right – you're wrong' dynamic play out in my everyday interactions?" Let's face it, most everyone is tested with this dynamic — in face-to-face interactions, in phone conversations and in emails. Perhaps we're not aware of it at the time, but we consistently encounter situations where we feel we need to be right, and not only be right, but to make another be or feel wrong.

Our ego personality is the culprit here as it both wants and needs to feel strong, safe and secure — mentally, emotionally, physically, spiritually and/or psychologically.

When the shoe is on the other foot, and we have the sense we are "wrong", our ego personality reacts and we feel afraid, bad, stupid, insecure, deficient, diminished, small and/or invisible.

The deal is that someone always has to lose in this dynamic. And, needing to win or experiencing being the loser, we find ourselves in interpersonal interactions that foster mistrust, conflict, competition and separation — all based on fear.

The solution is not to live in the world of polarity, but perspective, to live in a world of differences, not in a world of debate, to live in a world of "both/and", not "either/or".

The challenge, however, for the ego is how to live in relationship in a way that we can transcend the personal so we can focus on commonalities. In the world of the ego, it's all about being separate and independent — win-lose, "I vs. you". In the world of commonality, it's all about "you and me" — win-win, "we".

The questions underneath the question are, "What excuse am I using to rationalize and justify a win-lose, me vs. you, dynamic that fosters disconnection?" "Why can't I feel content about being right about something without the need to make someone else feel or be wrong?" "Why do I live from an "I'd rather be right than happy" perspective so much of the time?"

The truth is we are truly heart-felt, spiritual beings who, by the way, are human and have egos. Somewhere along the path of our growth experiences we separated from the heart-felt and interconnected aspects of our beingness and began to focus on being separate from one another — the human and ego aspects of our self. In the process we both created, and were indoctrinated with, beliefs, assumptions, expectations and world views that we took on to be "me".

As a result, we live in a world of assorted folks who have assorted beliefs and opinions. When we live life from an ego-directed place, then it's "all about me" and in order to feel safe and secure as "me", our initial reaction to competing beliefs and opinions is reactivity — a fear of losing "me", of feeling that "me" is being threatened. So, we operate in relationship based on our need to be right as being right means that I can be "me"; "not being me" is a very scary and threatening proposition.

When we are able to let go of our need to be right, we are able to live in a place that fosters inner peace, well-be-ing, harmony and connectivity — a place from where we can create more conscious and healthy win-win relationships.

As you move through your day at work, at home and at play, can you take the time and continually ask yourself about your underlying motivations when engaged in win-lose conversations? Do you need to

“win” for selfish, manipulative or fearful reasons? That is, what’s your intention when engaged in win-lose interactions?

So, some questions for self-reflection are:

- What will happen if I let go of my need to be right?
- What won’t happen if I let go of my need to be right?
- What will happen if I don’t let go of my need to be right?
- What won’t happen if I don’t let go of my need to be right?
- What is threatening to me about not being right?
- Do I feel enslaved by a need to be right? If so, how does this feeling affect me? Affect others?
- How do I feel when I am “wrong?” Why do I feel this way?
- What was it like to be “right” and “wrong” when I was growing up? What did “being right” get or not get me and what did “being wrong” get or not get me? How does that dynamic now play out in my life at work, at home and at play?
- How do I deal with the “unknown?”
- Would you rather be right or happy?

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Peter G. Vajda, Ph.D, C.P.C. is the founder of True North Partnering an Atlanta-based company that supports conscious living through coaching and facilitating. With a practice based on the dynamic intersection of mind, body, emotion and spirit, Peter’s approach focuses on personal, business, relational and spiritual coaching. He is a professional speaker and published author. For more information, [www.truenorthpartnering.com](http://www.truenorthpartnering.com), or [pvajda\(at\)truenorthpartnering.com](mailto:pvajda@truenorthpartnering.com), or phone 770.804.9125. You can also follow Peter on Twitter: @petergvajda