DON'T GET HURT BECAUSE YOU WANT TO BE RIGHT

People want to be right. That is human nature. In being right about something we want our conclusions to be true, our choices to be the right ones, and our outcomes to serve us towards reaching our goals. Sometimes, however, we want to be right simply for the sake of being right, often at the expense of someone else. In doing so, we usually end up also hurting ourselves in the process. Many times, when one person is right both parties end up in a loser's game. Examples abound in everyday life, such as cutting someone off on the highway because you had the right of way or disparaging your spouse because you had to show that you know better about a topic that you were arguing about.

Being right has its place, of course, and there are certainly many situations where being right is the be-all and end-all. If you are making a financial decision you want to be right, or if you are diagnosing an illness, you want to be right, and so on. However, there are many opinions on the downsides of always needing to be right, and it is often a topic of psychological counseling, relationship management, and team building. Zoe B, in an article at Lifehack.org writes "If we are so focused on being right then it leaves no room for other creative ideas to flow in – it brings our creative expression to a halt." Friedrich Nietzsche said "You have your way. I have my way. As for the right way, the correct way, and the only way, it does not exist." But these opinions only scratch at the surface of the downside. As we shall see, being right at the wrong time or in the wrong situation can cost you dearly from a safety perspective. Remember, safety is about avoiding unintended outcomes, and that is exactly what you will get if you are not careful.

For starters, the need to be right can ruin relationships. You could make your point and win the battle, but certainly lose the war. In a marriage, for instance, you may demand that a partner acknowledge your rightness. In doing so, you have just isolated your partner from your marriage and broken trust because you have not allowed your partner to fail. In a business relationship, you may be absolutely right about shoddy work that was done on your house by your contractor, but if you don't handle it tactfully the contractor may just leave you, and your wallet, high and dry. If you allowed yourself to give the contractor the benefit of the doubt, he may just come back and do right by you and even develop a friendship over it. By addressing things with tact you leave others with dignity and yourself with a healthy dose of humility.

"I'D RATHER BE AN OPTIMIST AND A FOOL THAN A PESSIMIST AND
RIGHT" - Albert Einstein

Of most concern is that being right can lead to hostility. In other words, you could get yourself or someone else hurt or killed. If a driver runs a red light at an intersection and nearly causes you to be in an accident, you would certainly be in the right to conclude that what happened was wrong. However, if you then chase that driver down in a high-speed pursuit and run him off the road, then you have set yourself up for a

conflict. What if the driver pulls out a gun and shoots you or shoots a passenger in your car? Or what if you caused an accident that cause others to be hurt or killed or you ended up causing serious property damage? All this because you wanted and needed to be right? Not worth it, for sure. So keep your motivations in check and you will surely avoid harm from coming your way. These situations make news headlines everyday!

As mentioned earlier, there are times when being right is really important and a necessary point to be fought for. The key is to pick your battles. Being right is an outcome that enables a strategy, but it is not a strategy in and of itself. Sometimes you can be quietly right and leverage that rightness to develop a win-win relationship with someone. Here is a simple dialogue that I hear play out almost daily in one way, shape, or form:

Customer: "My car is broken, what kind of junk are you selling here? I demand that you fix my car right now!"

Dealership: "Too bad, it is out of warranty, there is the door."

No contrast this to a softer approach:

Customer: "My car does not seem to be working properly. Do you think you could get me in to take a look at it? I realize it is out of warranty, but I really like the car. Plus, I will be in the market for another car next year and would like to come back here and trade mine in towards a new one."

Dealership: "We'll get it in tomorrow and take a look at it and we'll put you in a loaner car. Our goal is to have satisfied customers. By the way, we are offering a great trade-in value on your particular model with special financing to repeat customers, so now might be a good time to consider trading in."

Do you see the difference? Everyone wins, and there are no strings attached. Everyone walks away feeling respected. Your car will get fixed (you win), you might get a good deal on your next car (you win again), and the dealership might sell another car (the dealership wins) and you end up writing a good review of the dealership that helps their business (dealership wins again). Sometimes giving up some of your rightness leads to more good things coming to all parties involved. Most importantly, it will likely keep you safe by keeping you from getting hurt and putting more money in your pocket.

Check out my safety books and other safety resources and information at http://www.markkowaleski.com for more insights to guide you on your journey to living a healthier, wealthier, longer, and happier life.

Remember: keep TABs on your safety: Think safe, Act Safe, Be safe!

- Mark M. Kowaleski