

When a Woman needs to be Right (it can be hell on a relationship!)

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I recently overheard a man talk about how often the arguments with his wife have to do with her apparent need to be right. It seems she is always correcting what he says and how he does things. And if he is “caught” having been wrong when she was right, she has to make sure he knows she was right. He seemed helpless to know what to do.

Catching his conversation, I thought, “What a neat topic to tackle for an article at AskDanandJennifer.com!” Clearly, I followed through on the impulse. However, I must admit that what I felt on the heels of my great idea was guilt and shame because I do this very thing to my husband. I don’t do it all the time but I do my fair share of 1) having to be right, 2) correcting him when I think he’s wrong, and 3) making sure he’s aware when I was right about something and he either should have listened to me or isn’t he glad he did!

So, I determined to write an article about it because I actually have advice for how a woman can stop needing to be right! Then, I ran across this quote today from Albert Camus, “The need to be right – the sign of a vulgar mind.” Heaven knows I do not want to have a “vulgar” mind and the coincidence of the quote coming at this particular time must mean this article was meant to be written!

Before I reveal the secret to no longer having to be right, let’s talk about how the need to be right is hell on a relationship. Even some men have the need to be right and it doesn’t work for them either! Whatever the motivation is for needing to be right, whether it’s a control thing or arrogance born of insecurity, letting the person who needs to be right continue the habit in order to satisfy their need isn’t the answer. Satisfying their need doesn’t work because that need isn’t healthy.

When people choose being right over any relationship, they set themselves up to experience shame and loneliness. People don’t like being around those who need to be right. Always being corrected starts out a shaming experience but ultimately just becomes boring. People who need to be right all the time are satisfying a need at the expense of the relationship and so they are not being real. Eventually, the person with whom you always have to be right doesn’t look forward to your coming around. They do not want to be with you any longer.

Having to be right sets up the couple for feeling more shame than is necessary in life! The one who is corrected feels shame for obvious reasons. However, the one who has to be right also feels shame because he or she knows the satisfaction that comes with being right is shallow and not really worth it.

So, what is the secret to no longer having to be right? People suggest that you simply choose the relationship over being right and it will be all right. I say that is an excellent philosophy that isn’t easily accomplished in real life if you have a need to be right. Remember, I come from having experience with this issue!

My secret is more practical but will get you to the place where you can truly live choosing the relationship over being right. The secret is to treat it like a bad habit. That is all it is, really. Any time we routinely manipulate someone to satisfy a need that cannot be satisfied we are just gratifying a bad habit.

Treating the need to be right as a bad habit means that I try to catch myself before I do it. In the beginning, of course, it isn't always possible. Sometimes, though, you can swallow your words in the middle of voicing how right you are and even disappear, if you have to, in order to deal with the discomfort of stopping yourself. That's how it is in the beginning of stopping any bad habit. Sometimes, the best you can do is to catch yourself in the middle of it and just stop!

Eventually, though, you will find that you can stop before you speak and just not say the words that indicate the other person is wrong or needs to be corrected. If you have to, leave the room until the driving desire to open your mouth and make sure he knows you are right dissipates! It will get easier in time.

You can even develop a new habit to replace this one. You can practice being supportive, allowing, and compassionate. Just because someone does something differently than you do doesn't mean he or she is wrong! And if how it gets done is less than ideal, you are dealing with an adult. That person can handle whatever he needs to handle to get it done.

Breaking this habit is an excellent pursuit. The amount of shame, fear, and even loathing that goes away with the habit is a worthy pay off for the effort!

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There is a secret to relationship success that is direct, simple, and effective. We and others have used it to transform marriages that felt burdensome and hurtful into marriages filled with love and satisfaction.

You can discover this secret for yourself in the e-workbook called *Creating the Love You Want: Five Unique Steps to Improve Your Marriage*. Go to <http://www.CreateTheLoveYouWant.com> and order your copy right now. With it, you can begin making a difference for yourself tonight!