

# But I Am Right!

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Have you ever been in a heated discussion with someone and become frustrated because they didn't understand your point of view? This isn't an argument over opinion, as your mind testifies, this is factual. All that person has to do is see it from your point of view and everything will be fine.

Dr. Gottman once wrote that there is no objective truth in marital arguments. It seems that his quip carries a wider path than just marriage, such as parenting, the boardroom, management, employer, and friendships.

How many arguments occur between parent and child where the argument is mostly about WHO is right at the expense of WHAT is right? Let's say dad is frustrated because his daughter didn't come home on time for the 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend in a row.

He confronts her insubordination with a slew of rhetorical questions couched in a no-win format. His daughter has no choice but to see his infinite wisdom and succumb to his paternal judgment vowing to never violate his trust again.

When you were in the daughter's position, and each of us have been, did you suddenly have a vision of clarity and change your position from defiance to obedience? If you answered no, and you probably did, why? Did you know you were wrong? Yep! So why didn't you subordinate your position, which you knew was wrong, to your father's position, which you knew was right?

I submit there were two forces working against you over which you have little to no control. Force #1: Who in their right mind subordinates to a jerk? No offense dads (or anyone), but when you have to be right, you are a jerk, or at least doing a great job of acting like one. Human nature is such that we don't care who is right when we are angry because our pride interferes. Which explains Force #2.

When we are backed into a corner our anxiety level rises and our amygdala sends a message to the adrenal glands to fire at will. The fight or flight message is sounded throughout our body and epinephrine is spread to the major muscle groups of the body. We are juiced up and ready for action.

At the same time our body is receiving an overdose of adrenaline, the blood supply follows the adrenaline as support. Let's review what it looks like from control

central, the amygdala sends out the fight or flight warning. Our major muscle groups then receive an injection from a thousand internal EpiPens and a rush of blood flows from the brain to the major muscle groups for added support.

Note that the additional blood came from the brain. If half the blood from your noggin is leaving the scene to backup the flight or fight call of the amygdala, you are operating on half a brain when dad is chewing on you. It is virtually impossible to act rationally in times of anxiety unless you've preprogrammed your amygdala differently.

If you've ever wondered why your reasoning and wisdom isn't getting traction, perhaps consider a different approach. Instead of trying to get the other person to agree with you, discover what they are thinking first. After all, what is your intent of the discussion? If you want the trust and respect of your daughter, yelling at her and making her feel stupid doesn't work.

People will clam up if the space isn't safe to speak. However, if you know how to create interpersonal space that is safe, even your teenagers will dialogue their most personal feelings. They are screaming to get them out and if you don't listen, somebody eventually will.