

Relationships – When You Both Want to Be Right!

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It's hard to back down, says Jessica McGregor Johnson, but a “wake-up” phrase can help

There was a classic moment in my relationship in the middle of a disagreement when my partner said to me “the problem with us is that you think you are right and I know I am right!”

This summed up the dichotomy that is in most relationships, equally at home or in the workplace. There are times that you reach that impasse when both of you feel you are right. Problem is that when you get that far into the discussion or argument it is hard for one of you to back off. Backing off from your stance in that moment feels like you are giving up on your position, you are agreeing that the other is right and you are wrong. The ego hates that. However the good news is that you do not always have to do what your ego wants you to do!

What I have noticed is that at times, not always but quite often, we are actually saying the same thing! It is simply a matter of semantics. It is too easy to get entrenched in what we are saying and not listen to the other. So the first thing to do is to stop and really listen to what your partner is trying to say and make sure you are not actually coming from the same or similar place. This is particularly true if you are discussing how to do something. I have seen many times that if I just focus on the wanted outcome then often the need to be right becomes immaterial.

So what if you are not saying the same thing – what if you are actually coming from polar opposite places? At times like these it is good to consider whether this is truly, deeply important



or if you are holding onto a stance just for the sake of it. There is something deeply embedded in our ego that hates to be the one who concedes, that hates to have someone “win” over us. As long as we look at any argument in that way then we will always keep on fighting. At times like these a useful question to ask yourself is “is this really worth fighting about?”

If the answer is no, then stop. I tend to find the phrase “let’s agree to disagree” a useful one. If the person you are arguing with then continues you know that this need to be right is not about the actual topic you are discussing. It is simply about the need to be right. In that case you absolutely have no reason to continue. It’s not worth it.

For times like this it is useful to have an agreed phrase that you can use to wake you both up to the truth that you are arguing just to be right.

Now for my partner and I, we have the phrase “well you think you are right and I know I am right” – often that brings a smile to our faces and we can continue the discussion from a place of sanity.

I say sanity because the drive to be right can take us out of our sane logical minds. Think back to a time when you were stuck in that kind of argument – wasn’t it all over the top and, from an onlooker’s point of view, slightly insane?

Obviously if you are arguing over something that is very important to you then agreeing to disagree is difficult. In that situation I suggest that as the topic is so important that you take time out. You stop the conversation until the next day and suggest that you both think about it and talk about it after some time to review every angle. Just getting out of that space of “head to head” will help you both see the other’s point of view. And when you next come together start with a question – what outcome are we trying to achieve? When you agree on that then you can look at how you can do that – together.

If you like this idea and think it could be useful in your relationships have a discussion about it when you are both in a really happy place and agree on the “wake-up” phrase and how to handle this tricky situations. And I say relationships because this is not just about your partner – it can equally relate to your friends and work colleagues too.

about the author



Jessica offers Life Guidance & Mentoring to people who are at a crossroads in life. She typically finds that for many having reached the success they have worked towards for many years there is a sense of something missing, that this cannot be “it”. She guides you to discover yourself anew, identify your true passions, and live them, whether it be in your work or personal life. She works internationally with people individually on the phone and Skype as well as offering her signature “Get Unstuck in Two Days” individual retreat in Spain voted one of the top ten retreats for real change by Queen of Retreats. She is the author of *The Right T-Shirt*, *Write Your Own Rules* and *Live the Life You Want* and you can read the first two chapters of the book and find her other free resources at www.jessicamcgregorjohnson.com. You can also follow her on Facebook at www.facebook.com/JessicaMcgregorJohnsonCoaching and Twitter @Jessicamegj.

