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**Tell Them They're Wrong...and Let the Fights Begin!**  
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We are so good at telling our kids they are wrong-subtly or not, we do it countless times per day. Which of these have you heard from yourself?

You're wrong.  
That's not right.  
Try doing it this way.  
Here's how it should be done.  
You didn't think that one through.  
Have you thought about this.  
Do it this way.  
I'd never do it that way.  
You'll regret it if you do that.  
Here, let me do it for you.  
Here, let me show you how to do it.  
When you get to high school (university/workforce) you'll see.  
Your brother (sister) does it better.  
That wasn't very smart.  
How many times do I have to say it?  
You do it wrong every time.

The list is endless. We tell our kids they are wrong in so many ways, and so many times per day.

There's a little part of their brain that knows different. The amygdala, (safety brain) doesn't allow us to do anything or say anything until it knows that it is safe to do it or say it. By the time we say or do anything, we know that it is the right thing to do or say. Then, the first thing a parent, teacher, or coach says is, "You're wrong."

So, on the one hand they knew what they were doing, and we shut them down. Literally. Because, "Slam" goes the little gateway in their brain, putting them completely into defense mode.

First, they will argue to persuade you that they were right. If you continue disagreeing, you have made the situation vastly worse.

Their second line of defense is to show you they were right. The exact action or behavior that you want them to change will get worse, as they try to persuade you that it was the right thing to do.

For example, your kids are fighting and bickering. You wade in and tell them that they have to treat each other better, and stop the bickering. Have you noticed that it immediately gets worse?

You said that their behavior was wrong. In doing so you have given them exactly one choice, to defend those original actions.

Have you ever decided to lose weight, and for the next four days you PIGGED OUT! Or you decided to start an exercise program, and became a worse couch potato than ever. Or, you decided you were going to stop yelling at the kids, and it got worse. It's exactly the same thing.

When your safety brain recognized that you were telling yourself you were wrong-too fat, unfit, a bad parent-you went into defense mode. The exact behavior you wanted to change got worse as your safety brain tried to prove that it was the right behavior (convoluted thinking, but true, nevertheless). The kids do exactly the same.

The answer is so simple. With yourself, with the kids, make sure that they know that you TRULY believe that they are right!

WAIT A MINUTE! "If I agree that his homework is too hard, and that he doesn't have to do it, he never will!" "My teenager stole something. What am I supposed to do? Agree that She was right to steal!" "I'm supposed to agree that it's OK when he hits his baby brother!"

When you agree that the kids are right in their actions and words, you are not giving permission for them to continue doing it. You are not agreeing that what they did was morale, ethical, or legal.

When you agree that what the kids did or said was right, you are agreeing that, from their point of view, it was the right or safe thing to do. You are agreeing that they had reasons. You are agreeing that, for whatever they were thinking or

feeling at the time, they said the right thing, or took the right action to keep themselves safe.

If you agree that they have made the right decision, they don't get defensive. They continue to have access to their thinking brain. They can now see solutions and real, logical consequences if they continue with those actions or words.

Try it. Tell your teenager, "You're right to hate homework. It's dull and boring." Maybe you'll get the response, "Yeah, but if I don't get it done, I'll never get out of Mr. Boring's class."

In agreeing with them, they stay wide open to logical thought, and may well give you a reason to do exactly what they have been complaining about!

Tell them they are wrong, there is absolutely no opportunity for them to see a different way for next time.

If your child has a hard time doing his homework, a good response is, "I can see it's really hard for you." Then just listen to what she has to say, and agree.

"You must have been really frustrated with your baby brother, to hit him like that." "It's boring to do your homework, instead of going out with your friends, huh?" "Did you feel that you had to steal it, to fit in with your friends?" And, if you can't think of anything else, "I know you have good reasons for what you did, can you explain them to me?" Strongest of all, use the simple words, "You're right!"

The message, "You're wrong!" leads to defensiveness and worse behavior. "You're right!" leads to communication and better choices.

You choose how to handle it. Either way, You're Right!

*Calgary author Jeanette Kasper is an acclaimed professional speaker who's Canadian BEST SELLER, Anger is NOT an Emotion, is revolutionizing how we deal with others. This unique perspective on human behavior gives us an understanding of how people relate to each other that leads naturally to using the over 300 solutions Mrs. Kasper gives in her book.*

*As a best-selling author, international professional speaker, and syndicated columnist, Jeanette is always willing to answer your questions, give interviews, and do a training session with your company, association, or parenting group. Jeanette concentrates on helping others create harmonious relationships at work, home, and play.*