



DreamLift

a monthly newsletter from
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helping people create a happier, more passionate life!

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Everyone Makes Mistakes

I was wroo...I was wroooo...I was wrooon....

Whew. Those words can feel really hard to say.

When challenged, humans have instincts. We push back, fight back, state our case, tell our side, shift the blame, and/or run away. Fight or flight, right?

If someone feels upset, angered or frustrated by something you've done or said, even if you had no awareness or intention of causing that person to feel that way, why not apologize?

It shows weakness, Carol.

Does it really? I believe it's honorable to apologize.

"I'm sorry. Please forgive me."

"I was wrong."

I found myself in this very situation recently. Without awareness or intention, my actions hurt, embarrassed and demoralized someone. Whether I meant to do it or not is not important. My behaviors were interpreted that way and the person felt very upset and angry. Fortunately, the person brought it to my attention. Unfortunately, it came to my attention in the form of an angry, vitriolic, verbal attack.

My first instinct? As you might expect, I wanted to defend myself. I wanted to push back. I wanted to be "right". I felt upset, misunderstood and completely "thrown off my game".

And then I took a deeeeeeeep breath, and in that beautiful, peaceful moment I realized that my actions COULD have been interpreted as they were by this person. And I realized that pushing back would only turn the heat up and make the situation more volatile.

Guess what happened next? Without any extra debate, I apologized, wholly and completely

taking full responsibility. My apology was not accepted right away, and I had to offer it over and over again. "I was wrong, I am sorry, please forgive me". This continued for the better part of a week.

Here's the cool thing: every time I said I was sorry, that I was wrong, and asked for forgiveness, I could feel my power returning. I could feel my joy being reestablished. I could feel my self coming back to center.

Now I feel totally at ease with the whole situation, and I know the other person views the exchange as a "win". And that's perfect.

I had a wonderful, insightful gain from this experience. I am reminded that words and actions can be interpreted in myriad ways. Like anyone, I "default" to seeing things from my singular vantage point. When I stop, move around a bit, and look at things in other ways, I'm able to see other people's truth. I am now blessed with a heightened awareness. I want to be very clear about the words and actions I choose. And, I reinforced my belief that it's wonderfully supportive to be wrong, to apologize, and to ask forgiveness.

Playtime

The next time you have the opportunity to choose between fighting back or apologizing, consciously try saying, "I'm sorry. I was wrong. Please forgive me."

Make note of what happens inside. The sting you're anticipating will be far less than you imagine. The joy of allowing someone else to be "right" is far stronger.

And, it's the "please forgive me" part that closes the incident and allows you to move forward, head held high.

It's OK. Be wrong every now and then. It's good for you.