

Dusted Off and Ready

A Book About Making Life Great

Part 2

Pages 16-27

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Second edition

Disclaimer: While many studies show that kindness and understanding lead to a stronger sense of well-being and the potential for better success in life, the author of this book is not a healthcare professional and is not offering professional advice. This book is designed to help open up our thinking regarding community, kindness, and acceptance of ourselves and others; offering an opportunity to look at life from many different angles, while gaining new and positive perspectives. To learn more about the author and their experience, please visit dustedoffandready.com

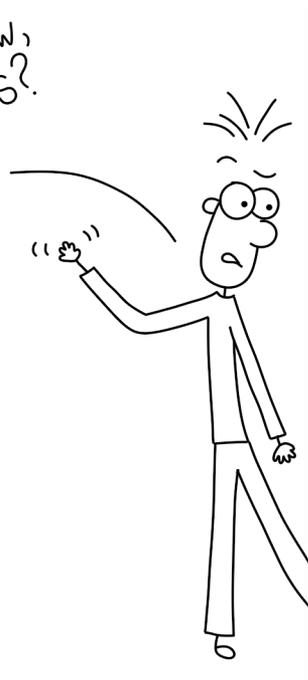
And here it is. The ever so popular... and oh, so careless... “who cares?”



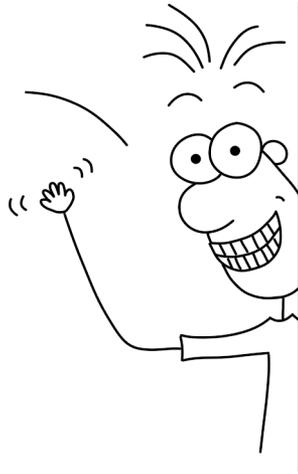
This might be one of the worst offenses so far. How can someone say “who cares?” when it is very clear that you care... or worse, maybe you are the one who told someone “who cares?” without thinking.

How do we grow past something like this? How do we grow past that strong and angry desire to make ourselves heard and make the other person **LEARN!?!** Or if you are the “who cares?” distributor, how can you grow past this disregard for other people’s feelings?

*I don't know,
who cares?*



Just Kidding!
I have some thoughts.



The first thing that comes to mind for me is to stop. Well actually, that's not true. The first thing that comes to mind for me is to freak out all over the place... but what I make myself do is stop.

Then I try to think about where the other person was coming from when they said what they said. Did they really mean to be so cavalier or thoughtless about passing out a “who cares?”

Sometimes kids (and teens and adults) don't even realize what they are saying. Sometimes you might not realize what you are saying. (Here's where an "I'm sorry" can fit in really well... you know, for when you realize what you said.)



A lot of times, people are just not as careful with their words (or actions) as they could be. But isn't it a great feeling, when after you say or do something that you shouldn't have, the person you hurt takes it easy on you? ...or gives you a break? ...or even forgives you? What a relief that is, right? With that in mind, let's try to remember to give other people a chance for recovery too.

Now maybe the person we're talking about meant to be just as perfectly rude as they were. Then I think about the fact that sometimes it's okay to help other people learn and see. However, hardly anybody learns anything through being screamed at, or insulted, or hurt. That's why the "stopping" stage is so important. It helps turn off the anger, or at least helps cool it down. Then maybe you can explain yourself calmly and the person might actually hear you... which could be good for both of you. They might learn something important because of your wonderfully mature approach, while you'd get to feel calmer and better inside after having solved something in such a great way.



Of course, there's also a chance they still might not care. So one option is to not feed into their desire to tick you off, and to simply drop it. Another option is to explain yourself calmly another day, in another situation. (It's hard to think that even these people deserve our understanding but we'll get to that later.) For now, just remember that keeping your cool is something that helps you just as much, if not more than the person you're not freaking out on.

And now for the "who cares?" distributor. All I can say is to make sure that you think of the times in your life when someone disregarded you. Did you find it annoying, or even infuriating? Probably. Do you really want to fill the world with more of something that you don't even like? More indifference or lack of caring? That doesn't make too much sense to me. After all, you live in this world. It's in your best interest to fill it with good stuff... like things that you and other people love.

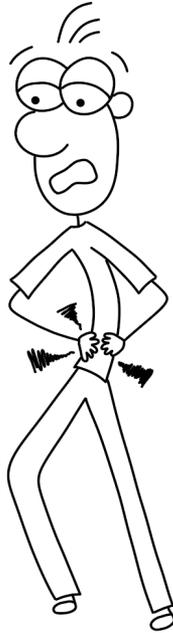
And now for the “I’m right, you’re wrong” game...



Well, here you have it. I have not met one person in my entire life that was totally okay with being wrong.

I have met people who are much, much better at it than others. And as I get older, and the more I practice, the better I get at it...

However, a little something happens to each and every one of us when we realize that we were wrong.



Here's the part that took me a while to get. In the beginning, admitting that I was wrong, or admitting that someone else was right, kind of felt like a little part of me was being smooshed or something... or even like a little part of me was dying. Dramatic, I know. But I think that a version of this happens to all of us, which is why it's so freakin' hard to be wrong.

Here's the good part. What I discovered was that those "dying feelings" turned out to be growing pains. They didn't last forever. And in order for me to really get it, my heart and mind stretched and changed and grew. That hurt at first (besides the growing and stretching, my ego was getting crushed) but in the end I was better. I learned something, and I became more patient and understanding (and much less angry about almost everything).

Here's how I practiced...

What if admitting I'm wrong means I'm stupid?

Well, "stupid" covers a pretty huge range of things. So what if I was just a little "stupid" in this case? I might be okay with that, because everyone knows that the way to get smarter about something is to pay attention and practice. Okay, problem solved. I'm not stupid but I can still learn from this. Anyway, everyone makes stupid mistakes sometimes. (Once I was so hungry that I picked up a piece of pizza straight out of the oven and the burning-hot pizza sauce spilled right down my mouth and left big burn marks on my chin that didn't go away for weeks.)



...Well, maybe that's not exactly the kind of personal-growth learning we're talking about but boy, was it stupid!

Then we have the very basic...

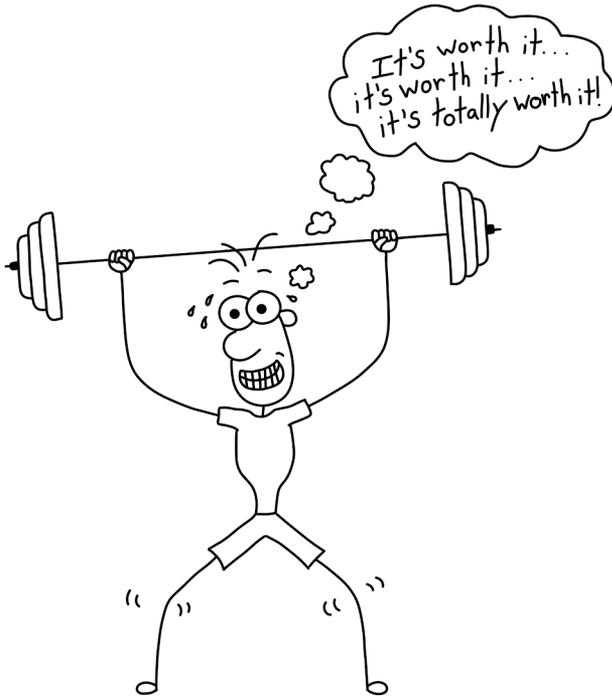
"I'M NOT WRONG! THEY'RE WRONG!"

Okay, so maybe the other person IS wrong, but I can't do any growing for the other person. I can only grow for me, so what could I have done better? Separating myself from the fact that the other person might be as wrong as wrong can be, how wrong was I? Once again, what could I have done better? This step usually helps me see that I was wronger (not a word) than I had originally thought.

Then there's feeling bad...

Here's my advice, forgive yourself. You're a person. Remember that no matter what you go through, you are a beautiful person who can offer good to the world. Focusing on your mistakes or hard times can block that. Catching ourselves when wrongness and selfishness creep in is what keeps us growing and learning. It's what reminds us that we are all human, allows us to make changes, and also what brings us closer to each other. (Forgiving others does this too.)

Life is a process. Just like when exercising or working out, we have to let ourselves get through the trouble and exhaustion of it all because we know we'll be stronger and better in the end.



Now for those of you who are still having trouble with the “being wrong” thing, just keep in mind that it’s going to be pretty impossible to be right forever because... well... once again, you’re a person... and you’re on the planet with other people. So for now, at least make sure that when you are right, you’re classy about it, and are ready for the challenge of when you’re wrong.

