

Making Mistakes

What is Right and Wrong

We were born to make mistakes. As infants we learned how to reach, roll, crawl, walk and talk with little instruction without fear of failing or doing it wrong. It's in our nature to learn through trial and error. But when is it that our attitude towards this changes? When is it that so many of us start to fear making mistakes or feel we need to prove or justify our actions? When did we go from feeling a freedom in making mistakes, to fearing them? Ask yourself - Is there a right way to do things? Is there a right way to behave? Is there a right way to think and act in life? Are your answers to this your opinion or are you right?

Our Beliefs & Opinions

For each of us our beliefs, attitude and views are unique due to the environment we grew up in and our past experiences. It is only through these experiences and the people around us that we even discover the possibility of something being right or wrong. What one person believes to be the 'right way' may be the opposite for someone else and its not until that belief is challenged before someone may even consider that there is another option. We often have trouble accepting any information that conflicts with a belief that we 'know is right' and we lean towards being defensive, bias, hypocritical or prejudice. It's times like these that we have a hard time believing that we are wrong, or that we've made a mistake.

Justifying our Actions

When our behavior or actions don't reflect one of our beliefs, such as making a bad decision or doing something that harms someone, our self-image of us being smart, moral and right is challenged. Whether the consequences are trivial or tragic it's usually difficult for us to admit we've made a mistake, even though we are well aware of it. Our response is usually to justify our behavior and actions, and can go as far as us change our belief. For example someone who starts stealing due to pure pressure may go from knowing it's the 'wrong' thing to do, to believing that they deserve not to have to pay for things and believing they have the right to steal. By justifying we avoid feeling guilt or regret and start to feel good about ourselves again, which helps us continue on with our lives. But it can it also limits us from seeing our faults and errors. Often self-justifying leads to prejudice and corruption, distorts memory and generates anger. Justifying may help us through the situation, but dealing, acknowledging, accepting and learning from our behavior and actions will only help us move forward and grow.

Learn from your Mistakes

From a young age we begin to worry about our self-image and begin believing that making mistakes is bad. We are afraid to answer questions wrong in school. We're afraid to speak up incase what we have to say will be perceived as stupid or wrong. We strive to do everything right. But ultimately we have to do things 'wrong' to learn to do things 'right'. A baby doesn't learn to walk the first time it attempts it, just like an adult doesn't ski down a black run the first time they ski.

We learn from our mistakes, and its our attitude and fear of making them that limits us. Learn to notice when you have to prove yourself or justify your actions and discover if you can be open to seeing or trying it from another point of view. Recognize that in some situations there is no right or wrong, only more efficient, practical, easier, and safer ways. The only way we can discover that is by being open and available to making mistakes, seeing them as a positive experience that we know we will learn and growing from.