



When being right, is wrong

I will never forget my boss saying 'I cannot fault your processes, however how do you think making Mike look like a fool in front of his team goes to helping the two departments get on?'

But I have done nothing wrong, I protested in my head. 'He called the meeting not me...' the words faded out of my mouth.

My boss was right. Each time I pulled out supporting correspondence from the department head (Mike), I did make him look like a fool in front of his team.

The words of my boss still echo. They cut because they are true. They say the real lessons are the ones that cut deepest. It was my first experience as a manager of being right and yet how I handled it was wrong.

It is not logical to say 'being right is wrong'. In everyday life we hear stories all the time. 'It's not right, it's not fair'...

So, why is it important as professionals to know when being right is perhaps not so right. In my case, I was informed. However I was ignorant of the impact my stance would take and the on-going impact on the two teams... I can say from my experience that as professionals, we need to move away from our personal view and move towards holding a broader organisational view considering consequences and outcomes.

There are three positions to consider. Mine, yours and the organisations.

Consider this scenario for a moment:

You need to dismiss someone in your team who has done wrong – HR advise you that yes, they have made a clear breach of policy and you can dismiss them. However your internal legal counsel advise you to provide them with a good package. In fact the package is equivalent to the one provided to another team member who has recently made redundant and had done no wrong.

You think 'why'?... It sticks in the back of your throat. You advise HR you don't agree. The response is; 'The company doesn't want it to go to court, they don't want it in the press, or worse still on a current affair show such as Today Tonight'.

The company's policy is clear, legislation is clear etc. However - Bigger picture interests come into play...

There is no sugar coating for this. It is a bitter pill.

Often the logic of your rationale for being right is absolute. Legislative or Definitive.

However the outputs are subjective and may present a known or an unknown unacceptable risk.

Hard to swallow I know.

It is hard to let go of being right - you scream in your head 'it is wrong'.

What to do about it?

Take a moment. Take two. Goodness knows it has taken a lot of your time already. A couple more moments won't hurt.

- Chunk it up, think of the bigger picture.
- Step back.
- It is not about you...

You need to let it go - From a personal view at least.

For me, in my situation, the relationship between my team and Mike's was never the same. It is a hard position to recover from.

Was it worth it? As I get older it is easier to say 'no'.

Have I learnt from it? Absolutely 'yes'.

Tess Brook is a communication and conflict coach and work place mediator. She specialises in deconstructing language and conflict alike. She creates awareness around how language leads to conflict, simply from your word choice, (refer to problematic words) and communication patterns. She works one-on-one ([communication coaching](#)), with parties in conflict ([conflict coaching and/or mediation](#)), teams focused on creating effective conversations (The trouble with talking program) as well as large team conflict resolution.

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