

# *You Are Wrong, They Are Right*



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**F**rom this point on, you are always wrong and the person with dementia is always right. Think about it. If you are always wrong and they are always right there is nothing to fight about. If you are not fighting, there is less stress and if there is less stress, there is more success. Now, men, doctors, and preachers still get to be right, because in their generation men were right. Men....savor the moment, because when my generation gets there, it won't be the same.☺ There will be a whole new set of rules for the generations to come.

Does anyone have parents like this?

*My dad will be telling a story about how on Wednesday they went to the sale barn. My mom will stop him and say, "No dear, it wasn't Wednesday. It was Tuesday." Then my dad will continue about how after that they went over to Harold and Stella's and had these really good cinnamon rolls. My mom will stop him and say, "No dear, it wasn't cinnamon rolls. It was this new kind of coffee cake." Do you think my dad at this point is going*

*to say to my mom, "Hey, thanks. You are so smart." No! Essentially what is my dad feeling? Frustrated, angry, and belittled. Is my dad's story hurting anyone? No.*

I understand that story is pretty mild compared to some of the stories you will hear. But is their story is hurting anyone? Not usually. Please simply listen.

Listen to the emotion behind the story. Usually the facts of a story are off, but the way it shows how they feel right now is true. Respond to their emotion. If the emotion is anger respond with, "That shouldn't have happened! I'm sorry. I will discuss this with the boss." If their emotion is fear, "I am not going to let anyone hurt you." If the emotion is sadness, let them cry and say, "I'm soooo sorry." Or say nothing at all.

Or, go ahead and fight with them. You can fight until you are blue in the face but who gets to lose in the end? You do. In fact, five minutes later, they have forgotten the fight and you are still steaming.

We need to take the word "NO." out of our vocabulary.

*"No, Mom, you live here now, and Dad has passed away."*

*Replace it with: "Dad's at the hardware store again. He can fix about anything."*

*"I told you 10 times. Your kids aren't coming until Tuesday."*

*Replace it with: "Richard is at work right now." (Make them feel safe for the moment.)*

*"Helen, I am your husband. Don't you remember me?"*

*Replace it with: "Yeah, your husband can be pretty stubborn, but he loves you."*

*“No, Dad, I am your son, John.”*

*Replace it with: “Your son, John, loves to play the violin just like you.”*

*“Shirley, your parents are no longer living.”*

*Replace it with: “Your parents love you. They would not forget you.”*

*“Mary, those aren’t your clothes.”*

*Replace it with: “Mary, company is coming. Let’s get dressed up.” Or, let her wear those clothes and return them to the rightful owner at the end of the day.*

*“Don’t you remember?”*

*Replace it with: “You are right, I forgot.”*

*“You already told me that story.”*

*Replace it with: “I love your stories!”*

*“You are retired and don’t have to work anymore.”*

*Replace it with: “It’s way too hot outside today to work. How about some lemonade?”*

Excerpt from “Talking to Alzheimer’s”

*There are very few things that they can control, very few areas in which they feel any measure of independence. Where decision-making can be left to them, make sure they can keep it. Instead of seeing their resistance to something you want them to do as a personal affront to you, or as a foolish whim on their part, look at it as an opportunity for them to make decisions, to feel autonomous, to feel they are respected. What could be better for them?*