Opinion

Photo of the Day |



Students chat while waiting for the bus outside the Northwest Quad on Sunday. Taking the bus can be a great way to get around campus, especially during the colder months.

PHOTO BY JACOB BLACKWELL, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

HOW TO BE WRONG

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Everyone's been wrong before. But has everyone sat with the discomfort of wrongness?

The purpose of feeling wrong is to learn from your mistakes. Being okay with being wrong is a necessary tool for self-improvement. If you never think you're wrong, you will never change for the better. And if you always think you're wrong, it will feel useless to try to change. But there's a sweet spot between those ways of handling wrongness. It's called self-forgiveness.

Self-forgiveness is a difficult skill to cultivate. It is made up of two types of self-examination. The first type is negative self-image. However, an entirely negative self-image is not conducive to change. It leads to self hatred, isolation and the belief that you deserve to suffer. The second type of self-examination necessary for self-forgiveness is kindness. It is the ability to treat yourself the way that you treat your friends. It is giving yourself the room to be wrong without uprooting your entire worldview or ego.

These two emotional frames of mind need to be in balance to motivate a positive change after being wrong. The purpose of engaging with a negative self-image is to motivate change and growth. If you don't let yourself, feel bad about the negative effect you sometimes have on other people, you will never change. You will become too full of yourself with no positive qualities to back your ego up. You will become hard to be around, except to laugh at how self-unaware you are.

We are full of contradictions as humans and as such, we are able to swing the pendulum of self-image quite violently in the other direction on a dime. Although having a positive self-image is a good quality, it can get to a point of being insufferable. When you strike the right balance of ego and self-image, you realize that you deserve to be forgiven when you are wrong. You are able to ignore small mistakes because you forgive other people for them all the time. Because everyone deserves forgiveness for the small things and you count as "everyone." Staying up late at night replaying your embarrassing moments (that other people have definitely forgotten) doesn't make you better; it just makes you feel bad. It makes people feel like they have to forgive you because your ego can't take being wrong. You have to let people see that you are both genuinely sorry and okay with being wrong.

Being sorry is a difficult emotional pill to swallow. It may feel like the world is ending. It may feel like you're the last to know what everyone has been telling you but you've been ignoring. It is disarming. But the way to combat that feeling of unease and stupidity is to have a mantra. My good friend and Associate Opinion Editor, Gia Cassino, recently wrote on the importance of having a mantra. It's something to rely on when you can't rely on your ego. One of my personal mantras is that "it's all gonna be fine."

No matter how difficult a situation, I tell myself that it will be fine and believe it. I have been through many difficult situations and have been terribly sorry for causing some of them. I have come out of those experiences as a better version of myself on the other side. But when I am actively struggling with the doom and despair of it all, I make sure to remember that I can be irrational and that feelings are temporary. I connect with the version of myself that has a more removed and outside perspective and trust him. You can't put a fire out from inside of the house. All that's left to do when you are wrong is to listen to the version of you that doesn't believe that you're the worst person in the world.

It takes time to get perspective. So don't isolate yourself by being afraid to be wrong or by expecting to be wrong too often. It's okay to be wrong. Your real personality is the response to that wrongness, not just your actions. Sit with being wrong sometimes; it helps you grow.



A group shares opinions and discussions. Being wrong in a group setting can lead to defensiveness or embarrassment, which can halt discussion or growth.

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A man looks at his reflection in the mirror. Examining self-image and reflection are important parts of growth that come along with being wrong about something.

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