

Making Enemies

The fastest way to make an enemy is to tell somebody they're wrong. You don't have to say it out loud. Just look at them funny. It won't matter if it's true. It won't matter if you say it nicely. You assaulted their "intelligence, judgement, pride, and self-respect." How you gonna get outta that one?

The first thing to remember is that you might be the one that's mistaken. The older I get, the more I realize how error prone I am. That has made me more cautious in voicing my opinion about whether someone else is wrong. I teach Sunday School class occasionally. You have no idea how easy it is when you're speaking off the cuff to think one thing and say another and not know you've done it. Trust me, I hear about it, regularly...

So when you hear an error, assume that the other person actually knew what the right thing to say was, but simply mis-spoke themselves. Forget about it. Dismiss it. You don't need to point it out to them unless someone is going to depend on it and get in trouble as a result. We had a tape come down citing a book with the wrong author. We all knew what he meant and no one sent a frantic voice mail to him pointing out the mistake. Why not? Because it wasn't the focal point of what he was teaching. It was incidental. Don't be critical and fault-finding. It helps no one and hurts a lot of people, especially the one in the mirror.

Remember yesterday's lesson? Even if asked, don't criticize or correct someone else except under extreme duress. The person you're trying to help will never admit error, and will put you on their list of folks to avoid. Try to build a new relationship when you're on everyone's worst manners list. Respect, respect, respect. *Never* tell someone they're wrong.