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Being Right Vs. Doing Right (part 1)

By: Grandmaster Taejoon Lee

Recently, a former student after being away for over six years, creating a successful business and now getting married to raise a family has returned to continue his training in the hopes of become a Hwa Rang Do Instructor. He has chosen to do so, realizing that Hwa Rang Do will offer him the best means of being the best version of himself as a husband and a father. He hopes one day he can pass on the benefits of his training to his children. He is also helping me to launch an online platform for me to be able to teach online globally, becoming the first student learning remotely from the East Coast of the United States. In the process of working on the Hwa Rang Do® Global Initiative, he asked me, "What type of students have you seen in your teaching career that succeeds in the Hwa Rang Do Program and what type fails?" I replied that there are no single type of person that succeeds or fails. Many I thought would do well ended up quitting; many whom I felt would not last went on to become good instructors. However, there is a common trait, which I have noticed in teaching and observing students for over forty years, that distinguishes the ones who quit from the ones who persevere.

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Here are my observations. Of course there are many factors that can be considered, but this seems to be a main underlying shared character trait; the desire to “be-right” vs. the desire to “do-right”. This state of being seems to overrule any common sense or reasoning. It is in fact the measure and reference in which all observations, experiences, and knowledge are processed. It is what shapes and defines one’s perception of the self and the world that they live in.

The person who desires to be right is not interested in understanding the truth, but is interested in only self-preservation, self-image, and how they are perceived by others. On the other hand, the person who wants to do what is right seeks to understand what is the best way and is constantly questioning themselves whether they are doing what is right or not. The person who desires to “be right” is also uncertain, but rather than seeking for greater understanding, they become myopic and stubborn to their opinion.

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The difference is rooted in fear. No one person can know all things and is in doubt of many things. Therefore, doubt is not the problem to a healthy, strong, confident mind; it becomes a barometer for truth. So when in doubt, they respond by asking questions, studying harder, practicing more, until they become confident enough to take the necessary actions to fulfill their desired end result.

However, the one who is fearful and insecure responds to doubt in a very different way and it is how we respond to self-doubt that distinguishes the "be-righters" to the "do-righters". To the "be-righter", they react emotionally as what they fear the most is being wrong and this reactive behavior, originating out of fear is completely irrational as fear becomes all consuming. They have fortified themselves in a castle of glass built on a foundation of shifting sand. As the sand shifts, it reveals cracks in the glass wall and one small crack can bring down the entire fortress of lies. Hence, they spend their entire lives in mending the cracks, defending the fort, protecting their home, never realizing that their safe haven is built on unstable ground, as they

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are too afraid to ever look underneath. Therefore, they must always be right or they risk their entire world falling apart.

Often, we mistake the “be-righters” as strong, domineering people, but in truth they overcompensate their weak and fragile internal self with a hard exterior, which is an extroverted “be-righter”. They are like a hermit crab, which above all things desire to hide, to be protected, and only venture out when it is certain that it will be safe. Then, once in a while, it takes a risk due to extraneous factors and musters enough courage on its own to venture outside of the shell. In doing so, it gets attacked and is injured. It rushes quickly back into the shell, proving that it was right, that the external world is a dangerous place,

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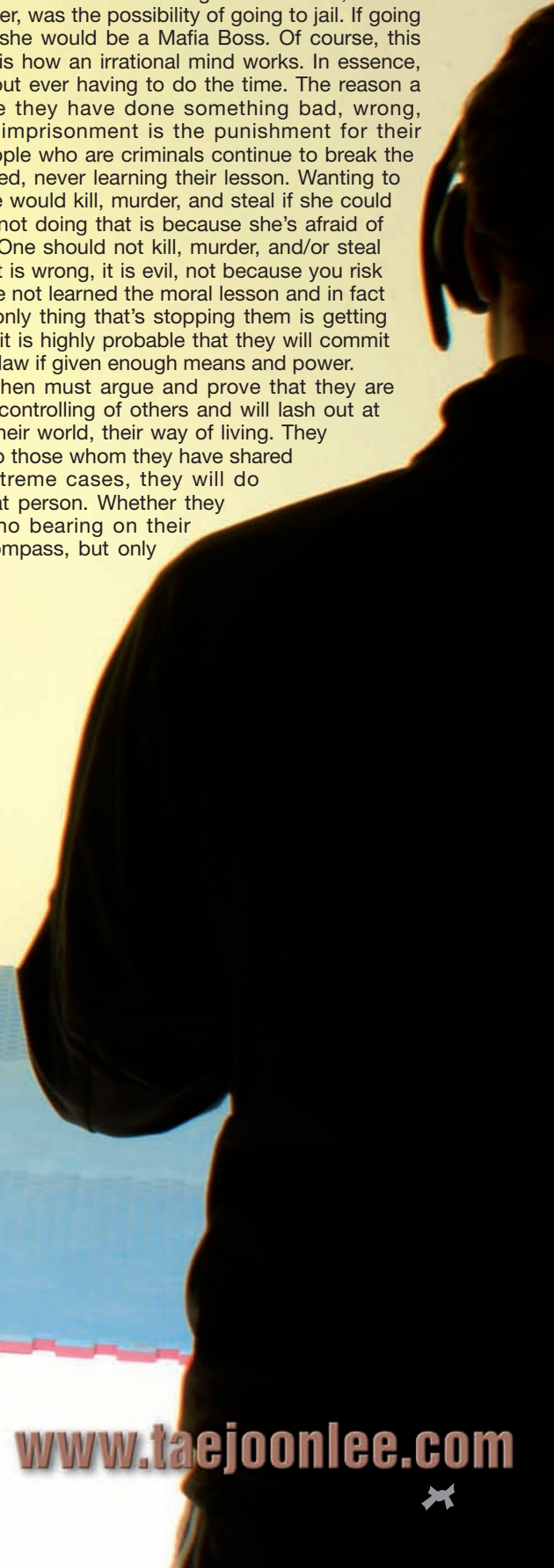


filled with pitfalls and others who want to harm them, never again venturing out of its shell.

Actually, the hermit crab never leaves its shell. The only time it does is when it loses its shell in a storm, outgrows it, or when the shell breaks, and when they do, they will quickly find another stronger, bigger shell to hide in. In fact, if a "be-righter" is found out and his/her glass castle, their world is destroyed through some traumatic experience, and if they survive it they will quickly construct another castle to hide even more strong than before.

A person once told me that she wouldn't mind being a Mafia Boss, but the only thing, which was stopping her, was the possibility of going to jail. If going to jail were not an option, then she would be a Mafia Boss. Of course, this makes no sense at all, but that is how an irrational mind works. In essence, she wants to do the crime without ever having to do the time. The reason a person goes to jail is because they have done something bad, wrong, immoral, broken the law, and imprisonment is the punishment for their wrongdoing. However, many people who are criminals continue to break the law and are repeatedly imprisoned, never learning their lesson. Wanting to be a Mafia Boss reveals that she would kill, murder, and steal if she could and the only reason that she is not doing that is because she's afraid of getting caught and imprisoned. One should not kill, murder, and/or steal because it is immoral, because it is wrong, it is evil, not because you risk going to jail. People like this have not learned the moral lesson and in fact are amoral. Furthermore, if the only thing that's stopping them is getting caught and doing jail time, then it is highly probable that they will commit acts of immorality and break the law if given enough means and power.

The extraverted "be-righter" then must argue and prove that they are right at all costs. They are very controlling of others and will lash out at anyone who harms or disturbs their world, their way of living. They are highly vindictive, especially to those whom they have shared their vulnerable self and in extreme cases, they will do anything possible to destroy that person. Whether they are in the right or wrong has no bearing on their actions, as there is no moral compass, but only self-righteousness.



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