



I  
LEARNED  
TO RUN!



## The Most Addictive Substance in the World

By Michael McGauley

My friends, I have some "sobering" news. After years of personal research, I believe I have uncovered the most addictive substance in the world. This is, without a doubt, the cruellest drug of all, and you can find it almost anywhere in our culture. It's in our schools, in our workplaces and in our homes. It ruins lives every day. It's worse than cocaine and heroin, more pervasive than tobacco, and oddly enough, more socially tolerated than alcohol. Almost everyone has indulged in it, and many are hopelessly addicted to its insidious, menacing "buzz." I know, because I am one of those people who struggle with this addiction, and I am taking steps to recover.

What is this frightening substance? It goes by several names on the street and among those in the medical profession, but I just call it "Being Right." It's not a pill or a powder, you don't drink it or inject it or smoke it, but once you develop a taste for it, you just can't get enough. An addict will sacrifice almost anything to get their "fix." They'll let their relationships fail, their health deteriorate, their careers crumble, and their spiritual wellbeing fall apart, just to indulge their hunger for "being right."

The signs of addiction are easy to spot. Abusers of this substance are typically angry people, often feeling alienated and misunderstood. It all starts innocently enough. A person might be sitting in a café, reading a newspaper, or driving to work, listening to the radio. Suddenly, they hear or read an objectionable bit of information and their heart starts racing. They bite into their lip and their eyes narrow into thin, angry slits. They think, "the person who said such-and-such, or did such-and-such, is a hypocrite!" Or they think, "This person is ignorant," or "a fool!" The addict's starts to reel with anger. Revenge fantasies spring up in their heads. They think, "Why, if they were here right now, I would give them

a piece of my mind! I would shout them down until they admitted that they are wrong and *I am right!*"

*Being right* means you can't let it go when someone says something or does something that you disagree with. A powerful hunger for "being right" means that you will fight relentlessly with your spouse, with people at work, with your neighbors and friends. You'll hold a grudge against your boss, against clients and people you haven't even met. The rage for "being right" will eat away at you from the inside, causing stress, health problems, relationship problems and mental anguish.

The person who is addicted to "being right" is not embarrassed by his or her addiction. Sometimes they are proud of it. They think that "being right" is their privilege, and their prerogative. They would rather hold on to "being right," and all the bad feelings that come with a dose of "being right," even if it means never being happy, never being at peace, and never finding the heart to forgive.

"Being right" is a lonely drug. It's painful when you are addicted, and it's even more painful to relieve yourself of that addiction. When I realized I had a problem with "being right," I felt obliged to take a few lessons from my friends who have taken 12-step programs. They told me that their first step to beating this addiction is to understand that the problem is real. Then the addict has to ask for help. There is a certain relief in knowing that you are not alone. Many people have a problem with "being right," and they are prepared to admit it. Recovery is not easy. No matter what you do, part of you will want to hold on to "being right" forever. But there is hope. It's called "realizing that you have choice." This might sound a little simplistic, but you would be amazed at how many people out there actually suffer under the illusion that they do not have a choice.

The addiction to "being right" makes you feel helpless. They think that it is impossible to resist the magnetic draw of that angry rush. But you can do it. You can resist. You can overcome.

More than anything, it takes practice. Take your time to study what makes you angry. Realize that there are some things in this world

that are out of your control. You can't do anything about the crazy people in your life who make poor decisions, or who do things differently from you. You might want to judge them, but, in the end, being angry only hurts you. Your desire for being right doesn't serve any cause, it doesn't make the world a better place, it doesn't necessarily even win an argument. If you can rid yourself of the thing that makes you angry then do so. If you cannot rid yourself of it, then learn to let go of the anger itself. It's time to give up this debilitating desire for "being right." Give it up for the sake of someone you love. Or give it up for yourself.

I'm not suggesting that you become complacent. On the contrary: to give up the desire to be right isn't an excuse to stop *doing the right thing* when a situation merits it. You don't have to ignore the troubles of the world, or submit to things that offend you. But you don't have to let "being right" eat you up from the inside either. You have a choice. Choose freedom. Choose to be happy despite the things outside of you. This is inner peace. And it is free for anyone who truly wants it.

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