



**Building a
consistent
approach across
broad enterprises**

an interview with
R. Brett Short

by Roy Snell, CHC, CCEP-F

Rationalization is the enemy of integrity

Please don't hesitate to call me about anything any time.

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Beware of people who rationalize. It's important to see the warning signs of rationalization. You are susceptible to rationalization when you are trying to deal with a major problem. You are susceptible to rationalization when you will benefit personally from a particular outcome.



Snell

You have to hate rationalization. You have to reject rationalization. You need to seek the advice of others you trust, who have high integrity and have absolutely no stake in the outcome. You have to be brutally honest with yourself when you suspect you may be rationalizing.

You have to be brutally honest with yourself when gathering the facts related to a difficult decision. You should consider making a list of all the pros and cons of a decision. If you are not systematic about gathering all the related facts, rationalization causes your mind to repeat the supporting facts in your head and suppress whatever does not support the rationalized decision. Fear, pain, embarrassment, money, influence, and power are all facilitators that trigger rationalization. If you feel any of these factors, you should be on guard.

One particularly heinous example of rationalization is the phrase, "The end

justifies the means." I think I can translate BS into English better than most. "The end justifies the means" translates as "I just did something horribly wrong," or "I am about to do something horribly wrong." If the phrase "The end justifies the means" or the phrase "My heart is in the right place" rolls through your head during a tough decision-making process, you are probably rationalizing.

Fear, pain, embarrassment, money, influence, and power are all facilitators that trigger rationalization.

You can see this in others, but you can't see this in yourself. My advice is to get help from one or more trusted advisors who are not afraid to tell you what you don't want to hear. Your advisors must have very high integrity. The world is really suffering from rationalization right at the moment. Wells Fargo, Michigan State University, and Penn State University all rationalized doing nothing about a known problem. Rationalization is one of the great friends of wrongdoing. Rationalization is one of the great friends of not acting on a known problem. You have to declare war on your instincts to rationalize. 🗣️