

Laura on Life – “What if I’m wrong?”

by Laura Snyder

You might say that I like to err on the side of caution. Sometimes I might even be too cautious. This comes from being the recipient of so many “I told you so!”s in my youth.

My personal maxim since the time of so many “I told you so!”s has been asking myself, “What if I’m wrong?”

If the answer to that question isn’t too severe then I know that I can go ahead with my plan. If, however, the answer to that question means financial hardship or certain death, I know that I need to rethink my plan. This has worked in my favor many times, so in a way, it has been proven to work.

My husband, however, has a very different maxim. His is something like, “Damn, the torpedoes! I know it’s going to work!” So, like an over-sexed bull in the proverbial china shop, he goes charging into a situation without another thought. Sometimes it works, but many times my words of caution, “What if we’re wrong?” go unheeded and we end up in worse shape than we were when we started.

He thinks itâ€™s because Iâ€™m never wrong. Thatâ€™s not it at all, though. The difference is that I think about the consequences if something goes wrong and heâ€™s absolutely certain that nothing will go wrong.

We recently bought a second-hand wood chipper. For you city folks, a chipper is a large piece of equipment that is designed to take tree branches and other brush and turn them into tiny chunks of wood. When you are done, it looks kind of like the granola in my breakfast cereal.

Then you can take the granola and spread it around your bushes and trees to make your yard look nicer. I thought it was a great idea. What could go wrong?

Well, first of all, I wasnâ€™t prepared for the earth-shaking roar this particular machine made when being used. It scared me a little bit, because usually when something makes that big of a noise, it means that you are in imminent danger. We turned it off and bought some ear plugs.

I wasn't thinking though. My kids were in the front yard trying to sell lemonade to passers-by in the time-honored tradition of children everywhere. What they should have been offering was ear plugs. They would've made some pretty good money. Maybe next time.

My husband turned the noise-making machine back on after we put our ear plugs on. Ah, that's better. My husband mouthed out something that looked like he wanted me to deal with the lighter branches and brush and he would handle the bigger, heavier ones. He didn't tell me that the machine grabbed and gulped down brush with much more enthusiasm than the bigger branches. As a result, while I wrestled with the unruly mess, I got slapped in the face with more than my fair share of twigs. I watched my husband push one large branch at a time into the granola-making mouth with apparent ease, while I dodged and ducked like a demented boxer.

After about five minutes the pile of granola under the chipper was high enough that we could hear the machine bogging down. It was clear that there was a problem.

My husband could see something stuck in the top of the mouth of the machine, somewhere near the jaws.

First, he jabbed at it with a stick, the machine just ate the stick. I could see the wheels turning in his head as he prepared to reach into that evil mouth.

He yelled over the noise, "I think the blades are closer to the bottom."

Immediately, I yelled back, "But what if you're wrong?!" This time I could see him thinking about it. Apparently, the thought of turning his arm into granola did not appeal to him and he shut the thing off.

At least the man has some sense of self-preservation.

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