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On May 2, 2022, during a baseball game between the New York Mets and Atlanta Braves, the umpire did something most umpires would never do. Here’s what happened:

During the top of the 5th inning, with the Mets leading 2-1, pitcher Chris Bassett threw what appeared to be the third strike on Braves’ batter Dansby Swanson, ending the inning. As Bassett was six strides off the mound, heading toward the dugout, umpire Chad Fairchild said, “Ball.”

Bassett was astonished and surprised. The replay revealed a perfect pitch, right over the middle of the plate, just above the batter’s knees. Bassett walked back to the mound with a bewildered face. He was so surprised that he couldn’t even argue. His catcher was so puzzled at the call that he didn’t react either. The Mets’ manager stayed in the dugout--no running out to scream and holler--no kicking dirt at the umpire’s feet. The umpire’s call on the pitch was so bad that it couldn’t draw any of the usual over-the-top outbursts. The game continued and a few pitches later, Bassett struck out Swanson and the inning ended.

As Bassett walked off the mound toward his dugout, umpire Fairchild stepped away from home plate, made a gesture where he patted his own chest and said to Bassett, “My bad.” Bassett acknowledged him with a respectful

“My bad.”

nod that could easily be interpreted as: “It’s all good.”

Typically, umpires are steadfast in their calls and decisions. They assume and hold a posture of confidence and don’t admit it when they blow a call, at least not on scene. In this instance, though, Chad Fairchild showed more humility than most umpires by owning up immediately that he blew the call.

In my younger days, I never said “My bad” to anyone. I thought it would show a sign of weakness, lack of confidence, or incompetence, but I couldn’t have been more wrong in that belief. When I assess my past leadership experiences, I realize I was more effective when I admitted my errors than when denying them or looking the other way.

How often do you say “My bad” to someone--anyone--when you’ve made a bad call in life. Whether it’s at home or at work, do you ever acknowledge when you slip up or if you were wrong in your assessment of a situation?

A “My bad” doesn’t always need to be supplemented with an apology. If you whole-heartedly tried and failed at something, what would you be apologizing for? Marv Levy, an NFL coach who was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame, told his players if they left their guts on the field after a loss, they owed no one an apology. But if they didn’t give it their all in a loss, they owed their fans an apology.

Should an occasion require a “My

bad” response, don’t replace it with an excuse. How many times can sun in your eyes cause you to drop a pop fly? Even when it’s cloudy out? Be careful with continuous excuses--one day the ball will land squarely on your head, whether or not the sun affected your vision, and it will sting.

If you ever leave someone hanging and it causes that person a major inconvenience, forget about saying “My bad.” You need to make a sincere apology. In these instances, have the courage to admit any wrong-doings that were a result of your negligence or lack of awareness. You may not be able to resolve what happened or didn’t happen, but you may restore the other person’s confidence and/or trust in you.

And always be self-aware as to when you’re treading on someone else’s kindness. When people make sacrifices or go out of their way to help you, be grateful and don’t take advantage of them or the situation. Be respectful of their time, resources, and generosity, especially if they are helping make your life easier or better.

From time to time, we all get caught up in the swamp of life and become near-sighted. We all sometimes lack proper awareness, not realizing the impact we have on another person’s thoughts or feelings. We all at one time or another need to step up to the podium and say, “My bad.”

~ The End ~