10.1: There Are No Ties in an Argument

On the evening of September 25, 2016, Jose Martinez, a 24-year-old professional pitcher for the Florida Marlin’s had an argument with his girlfriend and decided to go out for a late-night boating trip with his friends, Eddy Rivero and Emilio Macias. He invited some of his teammates who were present to join him, but they turned him down, urging him not to go because they felt it was too dangerous to be on the water late at night.

Outfielder Marcell Ozuna told him, “Don’t go out.”

But Jose was not to be deterred, he had made his decision. Eddy Rivero, the pilot of the 32-foot fishing boat, told everyone not to worry, “Trust me it’s not my time yet.”

At 3 a.m. the fishing boat crashed and all three men were killed. A pitcher with a promising career was dead, because of a decision he had made.

On September 12, 2008 48-year-old Metro Train engineer Robert Sanchez makes the decision to guide his commuter train and text at the same time. During the first three hours of his morning split shift he sends 45 text messages. With 222 people on board, Mr. Sanchez guides the train out of the Chatsworth station just outside of Los Angeles. After traveling only 1.25 miles he collides head on with a Union Pacific freight train, after failing to obey a stop sign that would have allowed the freight train to pass. Engineer Sanchez sends the last of his text messages just 22 seconds before the collision with the freight train. He never applies his breaks.

Robert Sanchez died in the crash along with 26 passengers. This was the deadliest crash in the history of the Los Angeles Metrolink. His decision to text distracted him from his ability to guide his train and the deadly accident occurred.

Every day, we make many personal decisions. Just think, the first thing you did this morning was make a decision. The alarm went off and you reach over to turn it off. Actually, you probably reached out, groped, and finally found the snooze
button and ended up delaying your very first decision of the day. In about seven minutes, however, you begin making other decisions. “Should I get up or should I stay in bed?” “If I get up, what will I wear?” “What shall I eat?” “Do I have time to eat?” Your first argument of the day is with yourself. You begin to gather information, and after some sort of investigation, you make a decision.

You will be making decisions, such as selecting a career goal, an appropriate major, purchasing a car, investing money, and perhaps choosing a mate. All these decisions can be made better if critical thinking skills are learned and understood. Being a good decision-maker involves good preparation, sound reasoning, and, at times, some luck.