

Re: Debates & Debating

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From: Immortalist (*Reanimator_2000_at_yahoo.com*)

Date: 09/13/04

Date: Mon, 13 Sep 2004 09:42:15 -0700

"Tim" <abc@abc.abc> wrote in message
news:_7adneH8qbVVP9jcRVn-qg@edaptivity.com...
> *Who is Larry?*
>

Probably one of the people that are on the bulletin board for the page
<http://www.truthtree.com/Debating/index.html>

Since Larry is not one of the authors of the four perspectives;
<http://www.truthtree.com/emailus.shtml>

Can you point to the difference it would make in the text?

> *"Immortalist" <Reanimator_2000@yahoo.com> wrote in message*
> *news:Z_OdnfWBA9z2Xt7cRVn-pg@comcast.com...*
> > <http://debate.uvm.edu/critadv.html>
> > <http://debate.uvm.edu/watchdebate.html>
> > <http://debate.uvm.edu/watchdiscussion.html>
> > <http://library.trinity.wa.edu.au/subjects/english/drama/debate.htm>
> > <http://www.schoolsdebate.com/>
> >
> > <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/debatingourdestiny/>
> > <http://www.debates.org/pages/history.html>
> > <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2000/debates/history/>
> >
> > <http://thesmash.bravepages.com/>
> > <http://www.debating.net/flynn/anthems.HTM>
> >
> > *DEBATING IS LIKE SEX BECAUSE.....*
> >
> > ** If you last longer than five minutes, you're doing it wrong.*
> > ** About three-fifths of it is unprotected.*
> > ** You get marked on the quality of your extension.*
> > ** It works best if there are at least seven other people involved.*
> > ** With some honourable exceptions, children tend not to be very good*
> *at it.*
> > ** Ditto animals.*

- > > * *The best place to do it is a debating chamber.*
- > > * *You tend not to be as good at it if you're drunk.*
- > > * *People who do it a lot with lots of different people tend to get*
- > *quite good*
- > > *at it, but nobody has any respect for them.*
- > > * *Success depends to a great extent on your position on the table.*
- > > * *People spend much longer talking about it than actually doing it.*
- > > * *Most people are reluctant to admit that they aren't any good at it.*
- > > * *If you do it too much, your degree suffers.*
- > > * *Having more points than your partner can cope with is likely to be*
- > > *counter-productive.*
- > > * *Although you'll initially feel nervous about doing it for an*
- > *audience, in*
- > > *time you'll realise you perform all the better with one.*
- > > * *The more you perform with the same partner, the more polished your*
- > > *performance will become.*
- > > * *Although the use of props can make a mediocre position easier to*
- > *work with,*
- > > *it is frowned upon by the purists.*
- > > * *Your own opinion of your performance is generally higher than that*
- > *of the*
- > > *judges, other participants, and your partner.*
- > > * *Always blame your partner for a poor performance.*
- > > * *The Dutch do it differently*
- > > * *Over-preparation can lead to a stilted performance*
- > > * *As a senior practitioner of the art, your most important duty is to*
- > > *instruct Freshers in its finer points.*
- > > * *While a poor performance can undermine your self-esteem, a good*
- > *performance*
- > > *will be an ego-boost for years afterwards*
- > > * *The introduction of a squirrel is generally considered to be a faux*
- > *pas*
- > > * *The Scottish do it a lot when young, and rarely when older*
- > > * *The Americans teach it in schools, and you can take a degree in it*
- > > * *The Australians televise it*
- > > * *The Far East have made an industry out of it*
- > > * *Watching other people do it, whilst sometimes an education, is*
- > *usually*
- > > *mundane*
- > > * *Most people do it the same way for years*
- > > * *Men come miles before women*
- > > * *Dressing up then wining and dining is seen as a sure fire way of*
- > *getting*
- > > *some*
- > >
- > > -----
- > >
- > > *If we don't want to live in a dictatorship, we must be vigilant to*
- > *preserve our*
- > > *freedoms. If we wish to preserve our freedoms, we must be informed on the*
- > > *issues. Being informed on the issues requires that we become acquainted*

- > *with*
- > > *alternative points of view. The history of the development of*
- > *civilization can*
- > > *be seen as the history of debates on issues. In democratic societies,*
- > *there must*
- > > *be public debating. Newspapers have served this purpose and still do to*
- > *some*
- > > *extent in this country. However, we seem to have lost awareness of the*
- > > *importance of debating since the days of Thomas Paine. The sixty-second*
- > *sound*
- > > *bite has created the illusion that the important issues are all brief and*
- > > *cut-and-dried. The importance of debating issues is fading from the*
- > *public*
- > > *consciousness. One principle aim of The Truth Tree is to increase*
- > *awareness of*
- > > *the importance of rational debating. But constructive debating is an art.*
- > *With*
- > > *all this in mind, the following suggestions are offered.*
- > >
- > > *Clarity: Avoid use of terms which can be interpreted differently by*
- > *different*
- > > *readers. When we are talking to people who substantially agree with us we*
- > *can*
- > > *use such terms as "rednecks" or "liberals" and feel reasonably sure that*
- > *we will*
- > > *be understood. But in a debate, we are talking to people who*
- > *substantially*
- > > *disagree with us and they are likely to put a different interpretation on*
- > *such*
- > > *words.*
- > >
- > > *Evidence: Quoting an authority is not evidence. Quoting a majority*
- > *opinion is*
- > > *not evidence. Any argument that starts with, "According to Einstein..." is*
- > *not*
- > > *based on objective evidence. Any argument that starts with, "Most*
- > *biologists*
- > > *believe..." is not based on objective evidence. Saying, "The Bible*
- > *says..." is*
- > > *not evidence. Authorities and majorities can be wrong and frequently have*
- > *been.*
- > >
- > > *Emotionalism: Avoid emotionally charged words—words that are likely to*
- > *produce*
- > > *more heat than light. Certainly the racial, ethnic, or religious hate*
- > *words have*
- > > *no place in rational debating. Likewise, avoid argumentum ad hominem.*
- > *Personal*
- > > *attacks on your opponent are an admission of intellectual bankruptcy.*
- > *Also, slurs*
- > > *directed at groups with whom your opponent is identified are usually*

sci.logic: Re: Debates & Debating

> > *nonproductive. Try to keep attention centered on the objective problem
> itself.*
> > *There is a special problem when debating social, psychological, political,
> or
> > religious ideas because a person's theories about these matters presumably
> have
> > some effect on his own life style. It is unlikely that in an argument over
> the
> > existence of quarks an opponent's sexual behavior would be brought up and
> it
> > would be easier to keep attention centered on the problem itself than if
> the
> > argument was about the importance of the family or whether a liberal or
> > conservative position was preferrable in a political debate. A suggested
> solution
> > is to make a general statement rather than one referring specifically to
> the
> > opponent. In other words, rather than saying "and that's why you are such
> an
> > undisciplined wreck" say, "a person adopting your position is, I believe,
> likely
> > to become an undisciplined wreck because ..."*
> >
> > *"The jawbone of an ass is just as dangerous a weapon today as in Sampson's
> time."*
> > --- Richard Nixon
> >
> > *A (Short) List of emotionally charged words and phrases:*
> >
> > ** Liberal!*
> > ** Tax and spend!*
> > ** Fascist!*
> > ** Politically correct!*
> > ** (The opponent) is spouting! his (whatever)!*
> > ** All pejorative names for races, sexual preference, ethnic groups, or
> > religions
> > * Baby killer!
> > * Socialist!
> > * Hippy!
> > * Druggy!
> > * Saying that your opponent "trots out" his argument*
> >
> > *Causality: Avoid the blunder of asserting a causal relationship with the
> > popular
> > fallacy of post hoc ergo propter hoc which declares that because some
> > event A
> > happened and immediately afterward event B happened that event A was the
> > cause of
> > event B. (I knew someone whose car stalled on the way to work. She would
> > get
> > out and open the hood and slam it and then the car would start. Singing a*

- > *song*
- > > *would have been just as effective to allow time for a vapor lock to*
- > *dissipate!)*
- > > *Also avoid the popular fallacy that correlation proves causation. People*
- > *who own*
- > > *Cadillacs, on average, have higher incomes than people who don't. This*
- > *does not*
- > > *mean that if we provided people with Cadillacs that they would have higher*
- > > *incomes.*
- > >
- > > *Innuendo: Innuendo is saying something pejorative about your opponent*
- > *without*
- > > *coming right out and saying it but by making more or less veiled allusions*
- > *to*
- > > *some circumstance, rumor, or popular belief. If you want to see some*
- > *excellent*
- > > *examples of innuendo, watch Rush Limbaugh. Politicians are, unfortunately,*
- > > *frequently guilty of using innuendo. It is an easy way to capitalize on*
- > *popular*
- > > *prejudices without having to make explicit statements which might be*
- > *difficult or*
- > > *impossible to defend against rational attack.*
- > >
- > > *Be sure of your facts. What is the source of your information? If it is*
- > *a*
- > > *newspaper or a magazine, are you sure that the information hasn't been*
- > *"slanted"*
- > > *to agree with that publication's political bias? Where crucial facts are*
- > > *concerned, it is best to check with more than one source. Often*
- > *international*
- > > *publications will give you a different perspective than your hometown*
- > *newspaper.*
- > > *Check to see whether the book you are using was published by a regular*
- > *publishing*
- > > *company or whether it was published by some special interest group like*
- > *the John*
- > > *Birch Society or a religious organization. These books cannot be trusted*
- > *to*
- > > *present unbiased evidence since their motivation for publishing is not*
- > *truth but*
- > > *rather the furtherance of some political or religious view.*
- > > *Could there be a bias here?*
- > >
- > > *Understand your opponents' arguments. It is good practice to argue with a*
- > *friend*
- > > *and take a position with which you do not agree. In this way you may*
- > *discover*
- > > *some of the assumptions your opponents are making which will help you in*
- > *the*
- > > *debate. Remember that everybody thinks that his position is the right*
- > *one, and*

> > *everybody has his reasons for thinking so.*
> >
> > *Do not impute ridiculous or malevolent ideas to your opponent. An example*
> *of*
> > *this is the rhetorical statement, "Have you stopped beating your wife?"*
> *This*
> > *imputes or presupposes that your opponent has beaten his wife. One*
> *frequently*
> > *sees references by conservative speakers and writers to the idea that gay*
> > *activists want "special privileges." This would be ridiculous if it were*
> *true. It*
> > *isn't true, but speaking as if it were true and well known to all is*
> *egregiously*
> > *unfair to listeners or readers who may not be well informed. It is*
> *probably*
> > *always wise to treat your opponent with respect, even if he doesn't*
> *deserve it.*
> > *If he doesn't deserve respect, this will probably soon become obvious*
> *enough.*
> > *There are all sorts of subtle ways to express hostility toward your*
> *opponent and*
> > *it is almost always unwise to give in to them. That doesn't mean that you*
> *can't*
> > *vividly and saliently present your criticisms of your opponent's beliefs*
> *or*
> > *behavior. But beware of phraseology which simply makes him look*
> *ridiculous. An*
> > *example of this came up recently. I was criticizing Pat Robertson's*
> *apparent*
> > *belief that God punishes people who do not behave as he wants them to by*
> *sending*
> > *storms or natural disasters of various kinds or even terrorists. I do*
> *think this*
> > *is a childish and obviously invalid belief. Saying so is not a violation*
> *of any*
> > *of the principles enumerated here. But I found myself saying that Pat*
> *Robertson's*
> > *"Big Friend in the Sky" would do such and so. This is objectionable*
> *because it*
> > *ridicules. It isn't as straightforward as simply saying that in my opinion*
> *Pat*
> > *Robertson's belief is ridiculous. Another example is to say that nudists*
> *"prance*
> > *around" in the nude. Of course it's inaccurate, but it ridicules and*
> *denigrates*
> > *as well and shouldn't be allowed in a rational debate.*
> >
> > *Regression to the mean: Another source of error which occurs very*
> *frequently is*
> > *the failure to take into account regression to the mean. This is a bit*
> *technical,*

> > *but it is very important, especially in any kind of social or*
> *psychological*
> > *research which depends upon statistical surveys or even experiments which*
> *involve*
> > *statistical sampling. Rather than a general statement of the principle*
> *(which*
> > *becomes more and more unintelligible as the statement becomes more and*
> *more*
> > *rigorous) an example will be used. Let's consider intelligence testing.*
> *Perhaps*
> > *we have a drug that is supposed to raise the IQ of mentally retarded kids.*
> *So we*
> > *give a thousand intelligence tests and select the 30 lowest scoring*
> *individuals.*
> > *We then give these low scoring kids our drug and test them again. We find*
> *that*
> > *there has been an increase in the average of their IQ scores. Is this*
> *evidence*
> > *that the drug increased the IQ? Not necessarily! Suppose we want to show*
> *that*
> > *smoking marijuana lowers the IQ. Well, we take the 30 highest scoring kids*
> *in our*
> > *sample and give them THC and test them again. We find a lower average IQ.*
> *Is this*
> > *evidence that marijuana lowers the IQ? Not necessarily! Any statistician*
> *knows*
> > *that if you make some kind of a measurement of some attribute of a large*
> *sample*
> > *of people and then select the highest and lowest scoring individuals and*
> *make the*
> > *same measurement again, the high scoring group will have a lower average*
> *score*
> > *and the low scoring group will have a higher average score than they did*
> *the*
> > *first time. This is called "regression to the mean" and it is a perfectly*
> > *universal statistical principle. It has nothing to do with what is being*
> > *measured. It works with molecules and atoms just as it does with juvenile*
> > *delinquents and schizophrenics. What is going on here? The whole thing is*
> *based*
> > *on the fact that when we measure something there is always a bit of luck*
> > *involved. Sometimes this is called "chance". Statisticians call it*
> *"error". There*
> > *are two kinds of luck: good and bad. Let's say you take an IQ test and*
> *score 130.*
> > *That's pretty good, considering that the average IQ is 100. What part of*
> *your*
> > *score is luck? Well, there's no way of knowing this, but we know that some*
> *luck*
> > *was involved. Is it more likely that your true IQ is 129 but that you had*
> *enough*
> > *good luck to make it 130, or that your true IQ is 131 and that you had*

- > *enough bad*
- > > *luck to make it 130? Well, there are a lot more people whose true IQ is*
- > *129 than*
- > > *there are people whose true IQ is 131, so there are more ways to get 130*
- > *because*
- > > *of good luck than there are ways to make 130 because of bad luck. If you*
- > *have*
- > > *understood this, go to the head of the class! But even if you haven't*
- > *understood*
- > > *it completely, remember it. Failure to understand it has probably cost us*
- > > *billions of dollars. Another important fact about regression to the mean*
- > *is that*
- > > *the less reliable the measurement is the more regression will occur.*
- > >
- > > *There are undoubtedly more points to be made here. Suggestions will be*
- > > *gratefully received. Larry has made the following suggestions:*
- > >
- > > ** Apply the scientific method.*
- > > ** Cite relevant personal experience.*
- > > ** Be polite.*
- > > ** Organize your response. (Beginning, middle, end.)*
- > > ** Treat people as individuals. (Not everyone who is pro-choice is also*
- > > *anti-gun.)*
- > > ** Cite sources for statistics and studies used.*
- > > ** Literacy works. Break posts into sentences and paragraphs.*
- > > ** Read the post you are responding to.*
- > > ** Stay open to learning.*
- > >
- > > *And DWA has reminded us that Carl Sagan had a "baloney detection kit."*
- > *Here it*
- > > *is:*
- > >
- > > ** Wherever possible there must be independent confirmation of the*
- > *facts*
- > > ** Encourage substantive debate on the evidence by knowledgeable*
- > *proponents of*
- > > *all points of view.*
- > > ** Arguments from authority carry little weight (in science there are*
- > *no*
- > > *"authorities").*
- > > ** Spin more than one hypothesis – don't simply run with the first idea*
- > *that*
- > > *caught your fancy.*
- > > ** Try not to get overly attached to a hypothesis just because it's*
- > *yours.*
- > > ** Quantify, wherever possible.*
- > > ** If there is a chain of argument every link in the chain must work.*
- > > ** "Occam's razor" – if there are two hypotheses that explain the data*
- > *equally*
- > > *we will choose the simpler.*
- > > ** Ask whether the hypothesis can, at least in principle, be falsified*

- > (*shown*
- >> *to be false by some unambiguous test*). *In other words, is it testable? Can*
- > *others*
- >> *duplicate the experiment and get the same result?*
- >>
- >> *Additional issues are :*
- >>
- >> * *Conduct control experiments – especially "double blind" experiments*
- > *where*
- >> *the person taking measurements is not aware of the test and control*
- > *subjects.*
- >> * *Check for confounding factors – separate the variables.*
- >>
- >> *Common fallacies of logic and rhetoric:*
- >>
- >> * *Ad hominem – attacking the arguer and not the argument.*
- >> * *Argument from "authority".*
- >> * *Argument from adverse consequences (putting pressure on the decision*
- > *maker*
- >> *by pointing out dire consequences of an "unfavourable" decision).*
- >> * *Appeal to ignorance (absence of evidence is not evidence of*
- > *absence).*
- >> * *Special pleading (typically referring to god's will).*
- >> * *Begging the question (assuming an answer in the way the question is*
- >> *phrased).*
- >> * *Observational selection (counting the hits and forgetting the*
- > *misses).*
- >> * *Statistics of small numbers (such as drawing conclusions from*
- > *inadequate*
- >> *sample sizes).*
- >> * *Misunderstanding the nature of statistics (President Eisenhower*
- > *expressing*
- >> *astonishment and alarm on discovering that fully half of all Americans*
- > *have below*
- >> *average intelligence!)*
- >> * *Inconsistency (e.g. military expenditures based on worst case*
- > *scenarios but*
- >> *scientific projections on environmental dangers thriftily ignored because*
- > *they*
- >> *are not "proved").*
- >> * *Non sequitur – "it does not follow" – the logic falls down.*
- >> * *Post hoc, ergo propter hoc – "it happened after so it was caused*
- > *by" –*
- >> *confusion of cause and effect.*
- >> * *Meaningless question ("what happens when an irresistible force meets*
- > *an*
- >> *immovable object?).*
- >> * *Excluded middle –considering only the two extremes in a range of*
- >> *possibilities (making the "other side" look worse than it really is).*
- >> * *Short-term v. long-term – a subset of excluded middle ("why pursue*
- >> *fundamental science when we have so huge a budget deficit?").*

> > * *Slippery slope – a subset of excluded middle –unwarranted*
> *extrapolation of*
> > *the effects (give an inch and they will take a mile).*
> > * *Confusion of correlation and causation.*
> > * *Straw man – caricaturing (or stereotyping) a position to make it*
> *easier to*
> > *attack.*
> > * *Suppressed evidence or half-truths.*
> > * *Weasel words – for example, use of euphemisms for war such as*
> *"police*
> > *action" to get around limitations on Presidential powers. "An important*
> *art of*
> > *politicians is to find new names for institutions which under old names*
> *have*
> > *become odious to the public" .*
> >
> > *It has been pointed out by various participants that following these*
> > *recommendations to the letter might make for dull reading. The idea is*
> *that a*
> > *little invective is a good thing because it adds spice. An interesting*
> *example of*
> > *this occurred in a nationally televised debate between Dan Quayle and*
> *Lloyd*
> > *Benson. Quayle had just remarked on some similarities between himself and*
> *Jack*
> > *Kennedy. Benson said, "I knew Jack Kennedy. Jack Kennedy was a friend of*
> *mine.*
> > *But I can tell you one thing, Senator, you're no Jack Kennedy!" This was*
> *of*
> > *course an argumentum ad hominem of the first water. But I would like to*
> *point out*
> > *that a political debate and a scientific debate are two quite different*
> *things.*
> > *But to concede the point somewhat I have a suggestion. Perhaps we could*
> *agree to*
> > *divide our debating messages into two parts. In the first part it would be*
> > *illegal to mention the opponent at all. The word "you" would be forbidden.*
> *Then*
> > *the second part would allow judicious use of personal remarks. Writing a*
> *debate*
> > *without using "you" is a very interesting exercise. I urge everyone to*
> *give it a*
> > *try!*
> >
> > *(Incidentally, the fugue you have been listening to if you clicked on the*
> *icon at*
> > *the top of the page was chosen because a fugue can be thought of as a*
> *debate. In*
> > *this particular fugue there are three combatants represented by the three*
> *voices.*
> > *There are notable discords sprinkled throughout the fugue, but all is*

> *harmony at*
> > *the end!*)
> >
> > *Should you be interested in learning more about the classical art of*
> *Argument,*
> > *beyond what is contained here, following are links that will be of*
> *interest:*
> >
> > ** The web site of Asst. Professor James Pryor, Harvard University :*
> > *Philosophical Terms and Methods.*
> > ** DWA brought to our attention this excellent resource: The Colorado*
> > *University List of Fallacious Arguments.*
> >
> > <http://www.truthtree.com/debates.shtml>
> >
> >
> >
>
>