

Re: Debates & Debating

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.logic/2004-09/1120.html>

From: Tim (abc_at_abc.abc)

Date: 09/15/04

Date: Wed, 15 Sep 2004 07:25:07 -0400

"Immortalist" <Reanimator_2000@yahoo.com> wrote in message
news:Z-2dnfXf58f8U9jcRVn-vg@comcast.com...

>

> "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?

If and only if you are a dirty cocksucker who takes it up the ass. So yes I
can point to the difference.

>

>> "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 you 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*
> > > *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!*
> > > ** Druggie!*
> > > ** 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*

> > > *well 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*

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> > > *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>
> > >
> > >
> > >
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>