

HOW TO DEFUSE ARGUMENTS BEFORE THINGS GO TOO FAR

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A proper argument can be highly productive. Unfortunately, not many arguments are done well. Most arguments fail to reach a resolution and lead to additional animosity.

Being cooped up with the same people day after day can lead to a greater number of arguments. If you're going to argue, at least attempt to do it in a productive way.

Handling disagreements appropriately results in a happier and more stable relationship for both of you.

Arguments can be uncomfortable. It would be a shame to not receive any benefit from the experience.

Think back to some of your arguments. Was your relationship better or worse afterwards? This is really the only measurement that matters. Are your relationships helped or harmed by your arguments?

Make the most of your arguments with these techniques:

- 1. Keep the argument in the present.** If your mom is being a pain in the neck, it's not helpful to point out how obnoxious your partner's mother was last Christmas. Keep the argument grounded in the present.
- 2. Calmness is better than animosity.** Your arguments will be more productive if you're both feeling calm and reasonable.
 - **Anger leads to poor judgement.** Research has shown this to be true. People are much less logical and reasonable when experiencing a strong

emotion. You'll accomplish more if you have your wits about you.

3. Focus on finding a solution. Finding a solution is much more likely if you're both actually trying to find a solution.

- Finding a solution is less likely if you're focused on trying to inflict damage on your partner. If you're trying to get even, your argument isn't going to turn out well.

4. Avoid insults. Insults are never productive. **You won't get more out of a person by making them feel bad.** Insulting someone isn't a strategy for finding a solution.

- You might not be able to make the other person feel good during an argument, but it's not impossible.

5. Have a cooling off period. If tensions are running high, a temporary break might be in order. Schedule your argument for a different time, perhaps even a different day. The issue will still be there, but you'll both be in a better position to find a resolution.

6. Be clear on the issue at hand. It's not unusual for one party in an argument to not completely understand the other party. Ensure that you're both arguing about the same thing. If you have different objectives, you'll never find middle ground.

7. Be willing to listen. You can't just speak. You have to listen, too. You never learn anything by speaking, but **you can learn something when you listen.**

- Be fair and respectful when you're arguing and give each person their turn

to talk.

- When it's not your turn to talk, listen carefully to what the other person has to say, rather than spending that time planning what you'll say next.

8. Consider writing things down. Sometimes, it can be easier to share your thoughts in writing rather than verbally. Some people are more comfortable writing a letter than having a confrontation face to face. Ask your partner if this might be a better option for the two of you.

An argument can be a great opportunity to clear the air, move past a challenge in your relationship, or avoid future disagreements.

Arguing effectively is a skill that requires knowledge and practice. An argument is successful if both parties feel satisfied at the end, and the likelihood of having the same argument in the future is minimized. If you repeatedly have the same arguments, you're not arguing effectively.

Arguments are more likely to occur under the present health, financial, and economic circumstances. Avoid weakening your relationship by arguing ineffectively. Make the most of every disagreement and create more stability in your relationship.