

ARGUMENTS VS ARGUMENTS

Did you know, the word 'argument' has two meanings in the dictionary:

1. *the act or process of arguing, reasoning or discussing*
2. *an angry quarrel or disagreement*

And the issue is that any argument can move from a reasonable discussion (definition 1) to an angry personal fight where people say and do things that are really insulting and nasty (definition 2) very quickly.

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The internet doesn't help with this either. While it is great that everyone has much more access to news and information than ever before in history, it is also very easy to find things you don't agree with online. And get into mega rows with people you don't even know. They can start off quite sensibly, but can easily turn nasty. It can be easy to hurl insults at people online when you disagree and no one has to deal with the consequences of their nasty words. People can just walk away from the screen and never have to see just how upset they have made someone else with their unkind words.

HOW TO ROW (OR WHAT I LIKE TO CALL ... THE HAIRY TOE TEST)



We're going to get into arguments. That is one thing we know for sure now. But when we do, we want to make sure that we are debating and questioning. Probing someone else's view to see whether they might actually be right. And we might learn something. Or we might teach them something if our point of view is different.

But we must try hard not to let it get nasty.

My brother could never quite resist an insult. Maybe it was to make me feel a bit unsure of myself so I might come round to his way of thinking. Maybe he couldn't think of any more good points to make about the issue we were arguing about. I don't know. But it has always made me think hard before I say anything personal.

So ... if you are about to say something about someone's hairy toes ... think twice and maybe take a look at these top tips for having a reasonable disagreement:

Respect their point of view

Always remember that it is OK for people to have a different view to you. And after reading this book, you'll have a much better understanding of why that might be the case.



Try (nicely) to debate. See if you can get them to understand your point of view, and maybe even change their view as a result. If you can't, then respect the fact that not everyone out there is going to agree with you all of the time.

Stay on topic

Don't try and 'win' the argument by getting angry or scornful of your friends' views. And never resort to personal insults. Keep reminding yourself of the point you are arguing about and keep the conversation to that.

Don't dwell on it afterwards

If you have managed to keep calm and get your point across, don't overthink things afterwards. After all, it is unlikely you want to fall out permanently.

And . . . if someone has said something nasty about the size of your nose or the hairiness of your toes . . . then try to ignore it and remember that arguments can make nice people say horrible stuff that they don't mean.

Don't shy away, though . . .

Don't try and keep the peace by not saying your piece. If you have a view, it is important that you feel heard. So have the confidence to speak up and make your point.