

How to Win Arguments You've Already Lost

NABBAN T. HAQUE

We all know that feeling. That moment when, after hours of toil, it dawns upon us "Oh snap...I think I'm wrong." Some of us take it gracefully, conceding defeat in an honourable fashion. Others among us don't like to lose.

For those of us in the latter category, here are a few tips to ensure that you win when you've already lost, or, perhaps more accurately, avoid a seemingly inevitable defeat. With a little salt, pepper, and the proper application of spice, it's amazing how much you can disguise a bad curry.

Firstly, you have to be quick on your feet like Muhammad Ali; many a time he seemed to be on the receiving end of hammer blows, but to the educated observer he was tiring his opponent with well-timed body blocks. Channel your inner Cassius Clay, and shore up your defence. Identify the flaws in your argument and adjust it slightly to render your opposition impotent.

However, you may not have the time to make such delicate alterations. As such, you may need to make a distraction for yourself. You know how master debater Stallone of Sylvester causes an explosion in a building on the opposite side of where he intended to operate? A similar effect can be created by relentlessly attacking your opponent's arguments. Bombard him with so many questions that he cannot decide which one he wants to answer, and the result will be embarrassed and stupefied silence.

Furthermore, by keeping your opponent talking, it is likely he will either run out of things to say, as mentioned previously, or he will make a mistake. Like any true Machiavellian villain, you need to spot this opportunity and pounce on it. Even if the mistake has absolutely nothing to do with the debate at hand, it will make your opponent seem like a scrub that knows nothing.

Finally, you need to quit while you are ahead. Do not



keep the debate going, lost in the blissful pleasure of toying with your prey. As we all know, the biggest mistake a villain can make is to monologue relentlessly, giving the hero time to recover. Go for the fatal blow and end it at a time when you appear high and mighty while he languishes at your feet.

If all else fails, you have one secret weapon. Try to bring your opponent's emotions into play. Don't overtly call him stupid or anything, that's just rude, but rather

gently imply that he is stupid. Keep prodding at the ego until the argument devolves into childish, cartoonish proportions. Once this has been accomplished, apply the devastating nuclear weapon that is Bugs Bunny's "Rabbit season, duck season" double-bluff juke punch. You'll be surprised at how often it actually works.

Nabban Tahsin Haque needs a shorter and better blurb. Please make one up and send it to him at nabban.haque@gmail.com

STAGES OF BEING LATE

IMANI KHALED

Amidst sexism, speciesism, all sorts of cataclysms, we often forget the little things in our lives that lead to more humiliating, if not devastating, circumstances. While some of us are utterly unaware of these treacherous little things – a divine miracle from the sleep gods – the commoners will always and forever, despise early morning classes from the bottom of their hearts. In fact, the hatred is so strong they are often willing to experience the tried-and-tested inevitable stages of getting late repeatedly without qualms.

Denial: The alarm goes off, throwing you off the bed like the devil made a note to come down all the way from his apartment in hell to ensure that you are denied the luxury of sleep. You look at the watch and smile. It is only five minutes past your wake-up time (remember you have already snoozed 20 times in the last hour). Two more minutes won't harm you and then it hits you. **YOU ARE LATE.** Prepare yourself for a frantic and desperate search through that pile of books gathering dust and the tangle of clothes in your wardrobe while you incessantly calculate how much time it will take you to brush, eat, get dressed, make your way through traffic, and finally step into the premise of your school. Forty-five minutes if you start right away, that's not too bad or so you think until all you have is 10 minutes in your hand.

Anger: You have officially entered the territory of



wrath and fury. You start throwing things around, mutter to yourself and curse everyone – from your teacher to your peers – who make it to class on time. Are they even human, you ask yourself. In your moment of blind rage, you question their genus, character, loyalty, and their level of expertise on sleeping. All because your clock defied you and ran faster. Mental note: fix that clock. It is getting out of hand.

Bargaining: Ten minutes. You appeal to the gods of traffic and road and time. You step out, shoes in your hands, with only the front part of shirt ironed desperately hoping that no one would notice the back. Maybe creases are in fashion now.

Guilt: Of course the roads are packed. You have known this all your life. The promises you never kept start dawning on you; you have failed yourself. Wake up on time, you did not. Finishing your less than 500 words assignment never happened as well. It's time to wear your scarlet letter and let the world treat you like a leper.

Acceptance: All hope is not lost. You have watched *The Princess Diaries* and *Lord of the Rings*. What is that one lesson these movies taught you? A queen or a wizard is never late; everyone else is either early or you simply strut into the classroom when you mean to because hey, it's your life. You are the boss. You don't live your life by the clock and that is absolutely fine. Unless you have a test on that day, of course.

Befriend early birds at your own risk. They will either transform you or make you feel absolutely miserable with their smiles of pity and empathy as you interrupt the lecture to partake in the activity that required your presence 10 minutes ago.

Imani Khaled is an animal lover, forerunner of her imaginary anti-frizz campaign, and sketches exotic travel plans all day, every day. Reach her at imanikhale@gmail.com