



Arguments You Shouldn't Try to Win

MUSHFIQUR RAHMAN SHANTO

Opinions differ from person to person. Being the narcissists we are, we just love trying to prove that ours is right, by throwing around facts and sarcastic remarks. Having arguments can be fun at times and be a useful exercise for critical thinking. In the professional arena, being a good negotiator and having the ability to persuade people goes a long way. But there are times you just need to let it go. Here are instances where one upping the other person isn't worth it.

AGAINST SOMEONE CLEARLY DISTRESSED

If someone is distressed or is hurting, he or she gets in an unstable mental state. They experience anger and frustration, and get defensive about the slightest issues. So naturally, you may find yourself in disagreement with someone going through a rough time. It's just plain inconsiderate to try to prove to that person that they are wrong. In cases like this, it's more appropriate to show empathy and let the other person emote their frustrations, while checking your temptation to engage in a logical back and forth. More often than not, these people know that they're in the wrong, but just get overwhelmed by their emotions.

AGAINST LOVED ONES

You need to realize that having a positive relationship with your loved ones is far more important than winning any meaningless argument. Of course, if the argument is about an important mutual issue that needs a decision, that's another story. But we often get into arguments about insignificant or personal problems with our loved ones. These usually end up being hurtful to the other person. In fact, these arguments shouldn't happen in the first place. Like if a close friend of yours comes to you complaining about how tough the academics are for his or her major, don't try to convince them that it's not that tough or that you have it worse.

ONLINE DEBATES

Online debates are the epitome of the phrase "not worth it". It takes up your time, your energy and leads to nothing but two strangers resenting each other. Platforms like Facebook and YouTube are not the place to force your opinions on others. There are certainly exceptions, like standing up for your friend who's being harassed on a post and such. But more often than not, online debates waste your time and ruin everyone's moods. People don't usually want to change their viewpoints so you're better off spending that time elsewhere.

WHEN YOU'RE AMONG FRIENDS ENJOYING YOURSELF

If you're out chilling with friends, for the love of god, don't start a heated debate. It just kills the vibe and takes away from the fun. Say all the people you're with are passionate football fans and all of you start arguing about which transfers make sense. Then by all means, go ahead. It's relevant to everyone and that's something all of you enjoy. But if you're hanging out with a bunch of people who are not that into football, and you take the floor to start the same argument with a buddy of yours, that's just going to annoy everyone else.

In general, try not to make arguments personal. You have to pick your battles, and you have to pick wisely.

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Guide to bargaining for noobs

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Are you constantly ridiculed by your friends for paying too much? Do shopkeepers mercilessly extort your inexperience? Then fret not, you've come to the right place. With these few steps, you'll master the art of bargaining and revel in the superior way of living. Here's how to be a true Bengali and learn the philosophies of becoming a proper haggler.

RESEARCH

It's suggested that you do your research before entering the market. For this you must spend somewhere between a week to a month to familiarize yourself with the product you wish to buy. Create a thesis of price ranges, differences in brands, differences in the ones locally produced and imported, price changes due to inflation, etc.

If you don't know the price, a good rule of thumb is to ask for half of what they say. This display of boldness and comprehension of the pricing system will surely throw the shopkeeper off guard. Now you can easily work your way up until both parties settle on an optimum price.

You should also know on which days and at what time the shops close down because they're usually keener to sell during closing hours or before a holiday. They're also very serious about their first customers, so get your friends and camp outside Gawsia overnight to be the first ones when they open.

INDIFFERENCE

You have to act like you don't need whatever you're buying, like you just strolled in with the intention of looking around and then decided to get something. It gives off the idea that a lot isn't at stake on your part and thus, you won't be interested in buying if

they charge you too much.

Another way to achieve this is to dismiss the product as much as possible. Talk about how you can easily find a better quality, or how it's just 'OK' and not something special to pay so much for. You must not stop until you're certain you've crushed the self-esteem of the shopkeeper to the point where it matches yours.

WALKING AWAY

When you realize that your demands aren't being met, and the shopkeeper has taken you for granted, start walking. This is a very important walk in your life, for it determines if you'll win the battle of prices. You must be slow enough that it gives them an opportunity to reconsider and call you back, but not so much that you don't seem confident. Confidence is key here. Let it be known that you can walk into any shop and get the price you desire.

While bargaining can be very useful, it's important to not go overboard. People we bargain with are often poor rickshalaw-pullers, retailers in New Market, etc. Paying them a little more won't hurt us as much as it'll benefit them. Therefore, remember to keep their conditions and the actual price in mind before you go and claim an absurdly low rate.

In conclusion, be assertive and reasonable. Go around a few shops to find a good deal and an idea of the prices. Practice the walk a couple of times in front of your mirror. Lastly, definitely make up a story about how the seller next door offered you a cheaper rate.

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