

The 7 Rules for Arguing

“You can disagree, without being disagreeable” Lyndon B. Johnson

It's normal for people to disagree. Arguments can be healthy if you follow some ground rules. When you have a disagreement with someone you have a relationship with, try your best to follow these rules and it will be a more productive argument. The rules are most effective if both people agree to follow them. Don't break the rules just because the other person does.

1. Listen and try to see the other person's point of view.

- Be aware of your facial expressions and body language. Does the way you are sitting or the expression on your face send a message that you are really listening?
- Don't interrupt when the other person is talking. Wait until they are finished making their point.

2. Stay calm and don't raise your voice.

- Very little gets accomplished when you raise your voice.
- Choose your words carefully. You are not thinking when you are yelling.

3. Don't use put downs, sarcasm, labels or comparisons

- “You are so stupid.” *Instead say, “I am frustrated because you don't see my point of view.”*
- “Oh, you are just so perfect.” (said with sarcasm). *Instead say, “When you say that to me I feel hurt and not good enough.”*
- “You never listen.” *Instead say, “When you do that I feel sad because I think you are not listening to me.”*
- “You are acting just like your brother.” *Instead say, “I feel very uncomfortable and embarrassed when you do those things.”*

4. Don't fight to win, fight to clear the air

- Make your point, but don't bully the person into accepting your point of view.
- Accept the fact that sometimes people will not agree and neither one is right or wrong.

5. Use “I feel” statements instead of blaming statements

- “You make me so angry.” *Instead say, “When you say that I feel upset.”*
- “You made me look like a jerk.” *Instead say, “When you criticized me in front of my friends I felt small and embarrassed.”*

6. Don't bring up the past during an argument.

- It will only upset the person more and you will lose the focus of your argument.

7. Don't involve others in the argument. Keep it one on one.