

The Many Uses of Argumentation

The root of an idea a person has is generally going to shine through when you have a discussion and make strong arguments against their (main) points.

When someone has intellectual integrity and likes to believe that they believe things due to reason and evidence ... they will be put into a difficult position. They will need to take some time to figure out what they believe in response. Maybe they will be convinced, maybe they will figure out a response, but they will never feel comfortable ignoring the rebuttal.

When someone uses arguments as a means to show dominance or gain power ... they will merely side step the rebuttal and shift focus to another topic or point where they can regain power.

When someone uses arguments as a means of self-preservation ... they will resort to defensive remarks that protect their ideas. Slogans, faith, insults, etc.

When someone uses arguments based off of the intellect of someone else (but they are quite dim or ignorant) ... they will usually just shut down and/or self-preserve. They won't be able to improvise on an idea they know little to nothing about.

When arguments are purely a means to a desired political or cultural ends ... full attack mode will be engaged on the person questioning them. Insults, physical assault, destroy reputation, etc.

At different points in my life I've done all of these (minus the last one). When I was a kid I adopted ideas I didn't understand, when I was a teen I invested myself in ideas I didn't understand. I have been petty and tried to show dominance at times. However, I like to think I try to invest myself in ideas I came to due to using reason and evidence. Of course, many of my values I have just naturally landed at due to biology.

I thought of this after debating an alt-right guy who kept side stepping every rebuttal I had to his conjecture on western culture. It almost startles me today when someone feels no impulse to address (even in their own mind) a very strong rebuttal to a point.