

Debating Does Not Work

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August 7, 2012

We continually hear from various alternative media pundits that in order to “take our country back,” we need to win the infowar by verbally bludgeoning the mainline public into [seeing through the fog](#). One such method for doing this is by engaging in fruitless arguing over specific issues, even when there is a fundamental difference in worldviews. All too often this results in needless confusion, destructive [balkanization](#), and mental exhaustion.

Regardless of whether it occurs over email lists, forum boards, comment threads, video responses, live Internet radio streams, or even face-to-face meetings, debating with another individual with whom you disagree on fundamentals is literally retarded. It is **very unlikely** you will persuade someone to much of anything, all the while it is **very likely** you will end up pissing off everyone, yourself included. Had you simply inquired into their ideology, that by itself should answer most of your potential questions; unless you are asking clarifying questions (without expressing your own thoughts) on a given subject with the goal of trying to more fully understand their position, then any sort of discourse is going to be patently unproductive for all participants involved.



If you think I am exaggerating (or just being plain too cynical),

it would behoove you to notice what happened when [those voluntaryists debated some socialists at the Café Libertalia](#) in San Diego two years ago. Keeping in mind that it was [a formal debate](#), my chief criticism of it was not really seeing what exactly was accomplished, if anything. I noticed that once the two debate teams hit an impasse, the entire event began degrading into a combination of repetitive slogans and silly hypotheticals that did anything but clarify where either of them were really coming from (of course, since I understood their respective ideologies beforehand, I more or less knew what was being left out).

Too many times have I observed flame wars on the information superhighway. Everything from spanking young children to public school students ridiculing a bus monitor to how to treat sexual dysfunction has been debated up and down the line without any sort of real conclusion, consensus, or even just plain clarification. Moderators use such tenuous situations to worsen balkanization by playing fast and loose with their site’s terms and conditions regarding acceptable behavior by arbitrarily removing one of the parties involved, usually the one they already disagreed with; all such “discussion” of that kind only gives rise to sanctioned bullying.

I found it humorous (in a very macabre way) when [Brenda Huffman asserted that political debate is actually healthy](#); nothing could be further from the truth. Granted, the liberty of free speech is paramount, but the issue here is not that but instead whether reckless “debating” and ridiculous argumentation actually moves the case forward for securing our Liberties. Huffman’s sugarcoating of how vociferous political engagement by expelling a gargantuan amount of hot air (that increases carbon footprints, which I am all for) is completely disingenuous. People are pissed off (and rightly so) about the Establishment’s increasingly heavy handedness; “fever pitch” debates are symptomatic of an incredibly worsening situation, just as the one the Founders were forced to contend with.

What really gets me is that, at the end of the day, what was truly accomplished? So you have some passionate guys yell (or type quickly) at each other about what seems to be some abstract, opaque phenomena in the eyes of John Q. Public. If the goal was to persuade people and change their minds, how can that be measured? By virtue of the fact that it isn’t measured, as well as the emotive drama that necessarily accompanies such “debates,” it would seem to suggest that the real motive behind such farcical argumentation is not in what it purported to accomplish, but instead was no more than an exercise in self-aggrandizement.

Even arguing with people who **do** agree with you on essential concepts is unnecessarily risky, unless you have either the skill or talent for diplomacy. It would be foolhardy to alienate good contacts prematurely; instead, give them some literature and allow them to “convert” themselves. Such interpersonal one-on-one mentoring is actually quite effective, but admittedly, it is nowhere near being as sexy or dramatic as getting people throwing

chairs.