

Published: Monday January 7, 2019

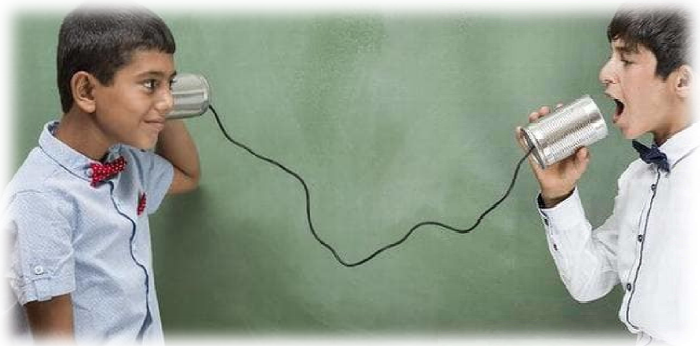
## Winning an argument does not make me happy

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### ***Arguments tend to bring up prejudices more than fact***

A couple of days ago we were discussing, among friends, the political situation in India. While the discussion centered on the political climate, it soon gravitated towards each of our personal preferences of politicians.

I, apparently, became 'argumentative' and shouted down those who disagreed with me. We parted after a heated argument and I felt triumphant. Later however, I felt



uncomfortable, for the gentlemen I had argued with seemed uncomfortable talking to me. That evening, a well-wisher called me aside and asked if I felt happy about 'winning the argument'. I admitted that I was actually feeling unhappy that I had diminished my friends I had argued with.

My well-wisher then told me that arguments tend to polarise conversations, for in arguing we attempt to prove the other wrong, while we believe we are right. He also said that in my arguing with my friends, I became aggressive, justifying my stand and that did not help.

My well-wisher recommended that if in the argument I had been able to listen to another's point of view rather than shouting the person down, we may have parted with less unhappiness on my part and certainly no hurt being felt by my friends. He further told me that in my arguing, there was more 'judgement' and 'opinions' than there were 'facts.' Arguments therefore, he reiterated, tend to bring up prejudices more than fact.

As the gentleman was helping me understand my behaviour that evening, I was reminded of a story I had read a few years ago. Two people arguing each on their points of view went to an arbitrator, who listened to the first person's arguments and said, "You are right." After listening to the second person's argument the arbitrator responded by saying, "You are also right." Both the parties in contention confronted the arbitrator and said, "Who is right?" The arbitrator said "Both of you are right."

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