

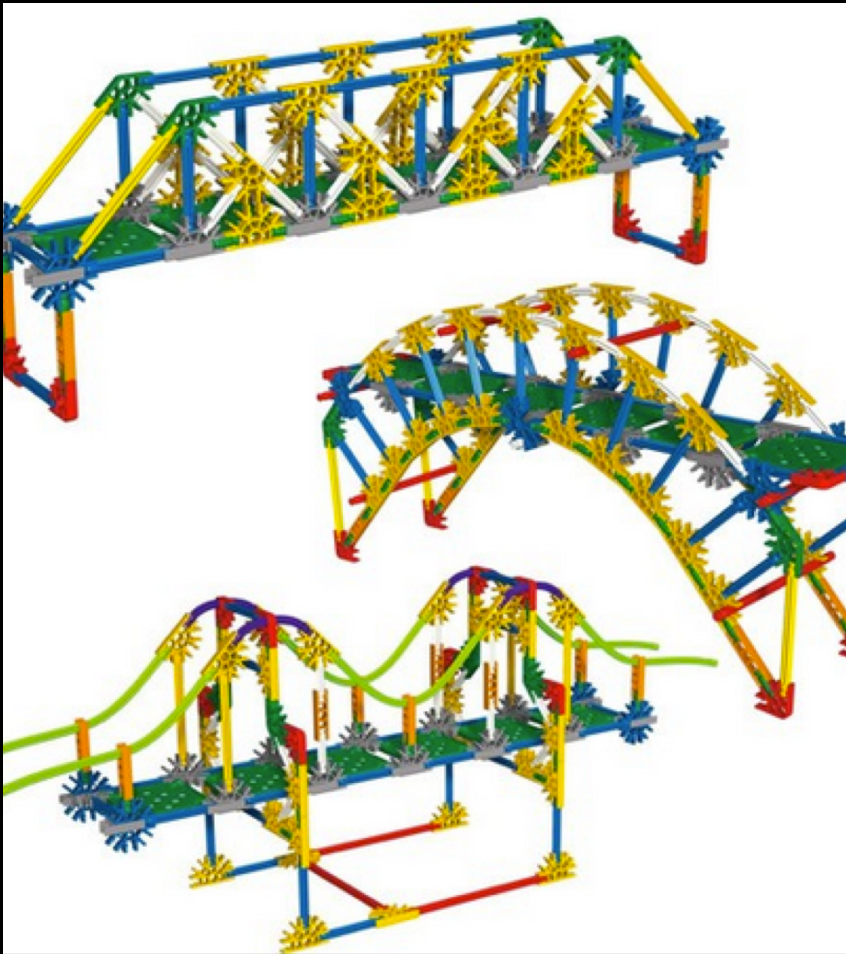
Arguing Constructively

Based on Dominic Infante's text *Arguing Constructively*

Overview

- Constructive versus destructive communication
- Argumentative competence
- Maintaining interpersonal relationships when arguing

Arguing is Constructive



- Arguing is a basic skill
 - Not just about mechanics
 - Also operates interpersonally
- Constructive, not destructive
 - Don't want to be hostile or verbally aggressive

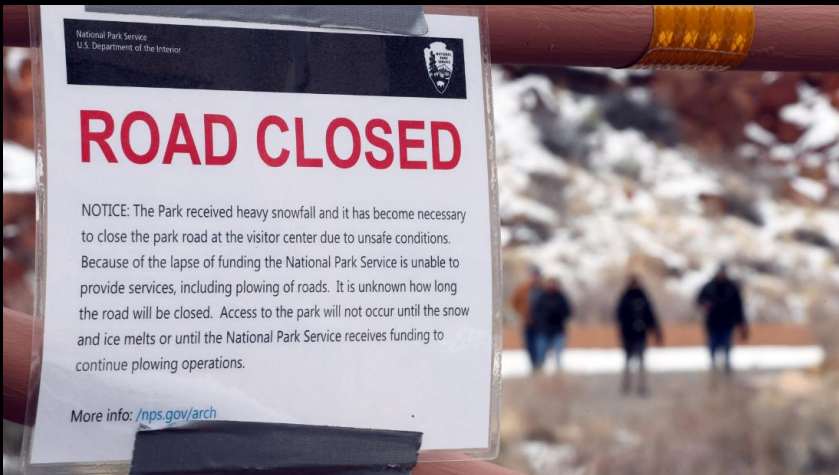
Verbal Aggression

- “Designed to produce psychological pain, to have the person feel less favorably about self” (p. 21)
- May be interpreted differently by different people
 - That’s OK
 - Legitimate basis for arguments themselves
 - Helps with perspective taking



VERBAL ABUSE CAN BE JUST AS HORRIFIC, BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO SUFFER IN SILENCE. CALL THE AWARE HELPLINE FOR ADVICE AND SUPPORT, MONDAY TO FRIDAY FROM 3PM TO 9.30PM ON 1800 774 5935.

Argumentative Competence



1. State the controversy in propositional form
2. Analyze position and invent arguments
3. Present & defend your position
4. Attack other positions
5. Manage interpersonal relations

Images from Los Angeles Daily News; CNN

Establishing Proposition

- More skilled in arguing, more able to avoid verbal aggression
- Establishing proposition incredibly helpful with that!
- Need to agree on what you can't agree on
- Ex: Cookie dough



Propositions

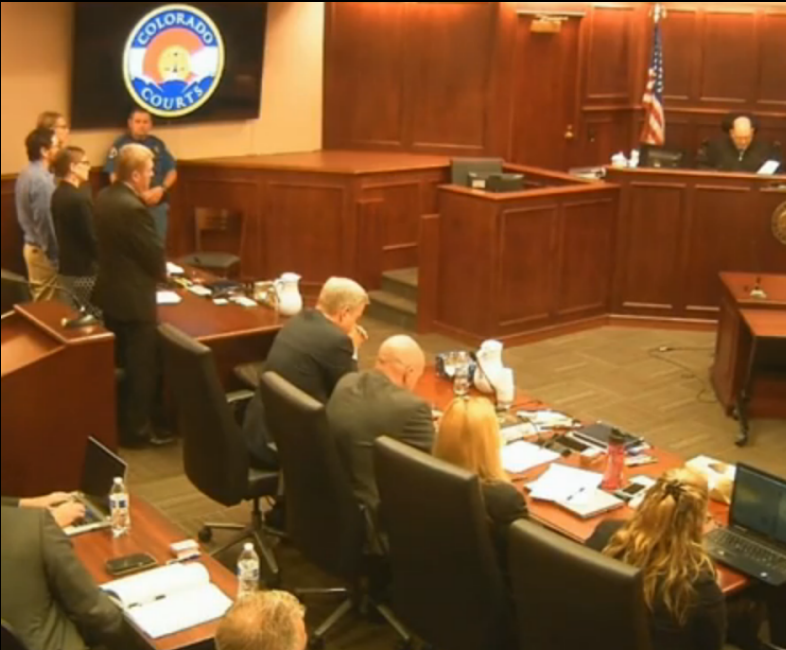


Image from Westword

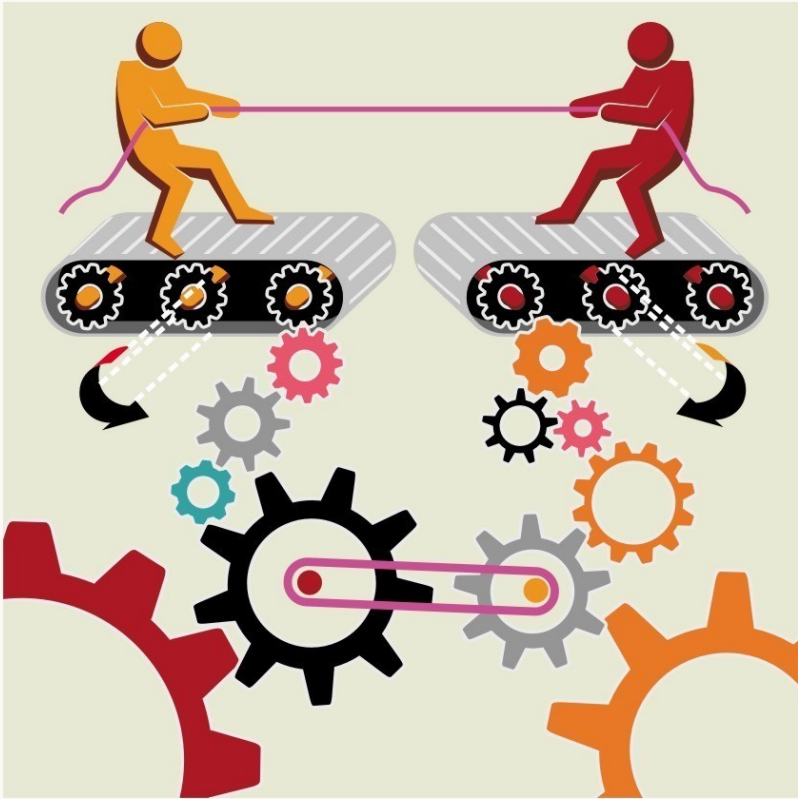
- All are effectively proposals
- Affirmative & negative
 - Affirmative: Burden of proof (think prosecution)
 - Negative: Status quo (think defense)
- Don't take on the burden of proof if you don't have to!

Being Prepared for Arguments at Any Moment

- Seek out info!
- Cultivate a desire to be informed
 - Personal experience
 - Talking with others (testimony)
 - Media
- Argue more and learn
 - Become “information sensitive”



Arguing is Interpersonal



- Often people don't want to argue because they think it will ruin relationships
- Following principles of argumentation actually strengthens relationships!

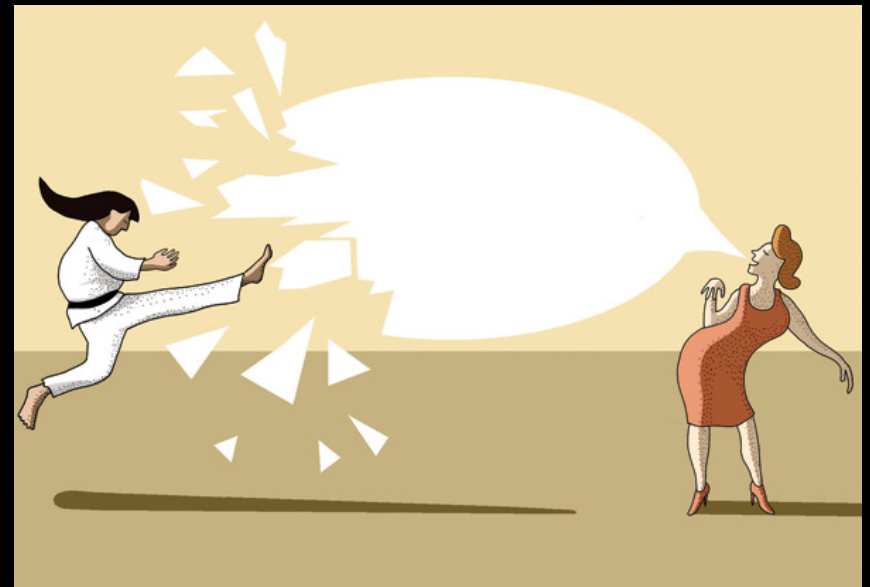
Arguing Helps Relationships

- Keeps things interesting
 - Always something to talk about
- Creates more understanding
 - Self-disclosure
- Helps people grow together
 - Mutual learning



Dealing with Verbal Aggression

- Leave if necessary
- If you decide to stay...
 - Point out difference between verbal aggressiveness and argumentativeness
 - Ask them to explain/justify verbal aggression
 - Appeal to rationality
 - Don't use verbal aggressiveness back
- Be sure not to “overdo it” however!



Tips & Tricks for Maintaining Interpersonal Relationships while Arguing



- Attack positions, not people
- Be compassionate/allow to save face
- Acknowledge shared POVs/when they make good points
- Listen, don't yell, keep good argumentative pace