



**How to Win an
Argument**

Pitsel & Associates Ltd.



- "Never argue with a fool; onlookers may not be able to tell the difference."
- "Most conversations are simply monologues delivered in the presence of a witness".





Types of Arguments

- The Argumentative, Aggressive type
- The Whining, Complaining Type
- The Confused, Misinformed Type



Principles



- People want to be heard and to have their opinions acknowledged
- People want others to understand how they feel
- Explanations are a waste of time with those who merely want to argue or to complain



Principles



- People who complain and whine usually do so because they feel powerless, and they want YOU to do something about the situation.

- The only person who can solve the problem is the person who owns the problem.



Strategies



When people are emotional and aggressive:

- Begin with acknowledging their feelings by saying:
 - I can understand that you are (angry, upset, furious, etc.), or,
 - I can see that you are (name feeling), or,
 - I can hear that you are (name feeling)



Strategies



- Do NOT move into content until you have acknowledged the emotional environment in which people are operating.
- Do NOT tell people to “calm down”
- Match, with slightly less emphasis, the other person’s energy.





- Maintain eye contact
- Use their name
- Repeat the exact phrases they use
- Stop them non-verbally when you hear them begin to recycle, and say:
 - “Let me make sure I understand your concern. You believe that . . .”





- Use the “I agree . . . I disagree . . .” form. E.g. “I agree that this is a totally different way of doing things than what we have done before. I disagree that is not going to be effective.”





- Most disagreement that occurs, happens over interpretations and not facts. How can you argue with someone who believes that things will be worse? You may not share that belief but that is different than saying s/he is wrong.





When people are whiny and complaining:

- Remember, people who are whiny and complaining do not really want an answer to their complaint.



They do want YOU to solve their problems





- Ask yourself – Who owns this problem?
- If THEY own it, then acknowledge that:
 - They have a right to feel how they feel
 - That their perceptions are true – TO THEM
 - When they are ready to do something, you will be willing to help





- If you JOINTLY own the problem, then:
 - Ask them what they think you should do – specifically
 - Decide whether or not you can or should agree to their request
 - Use a “When . . . Will” format – “When you do X, I will be happy to do Y”





When people are confused and
misinformed:

- Begin by listening to the “facts” as they perceive them
- Agree with what they have said that is correct.
- Correct erroneous information
- Separate data from conclusions
- If your conclusions differ, provide reasons for the difference.

