

## *Why Arguments Are Personal*

An *argument* refers to a discussion in which there is a disagreement and suggests the use of logic and the bringing forth of facts to support or refute a point. Using rhetoric and logic, each party hopes to persuade the other that their version of the truth is indisputable or, at the least, highly probable. There is a strong desire or need to convince the other side of the righteousness of your point of view. Arguments get heated when the parties have an emotional, mental or financial stake in the outcome.

An argument is different from a *discussion* where the parties talk about something in a deliberate fashion, with varying opinions offered constructively and usually amicably, so as to settle an issue or decide on a course of action. In a discussion, the intent of the parties is to arrive at a mutually agreed upon solution, and there is little or no emotional attachment to the outcome.

People have arguments when they are speaking the truth from their beliefs. Each feels their interpretation of the truth is the right one. There is a strong need to show the other side that they were wrong and to acknowledge your interpretation of the truth. Arguments are like drawing a line in the sand. There is a right way and a wrong way to think, act or feel. It is my way or the highway. Many religious and political discussions generate great passion and often lead to arguments when the parties cannot agree. One person's opinion that candidate X is the best choice to lead the nation may not be shared by people who support Y. Likewise, one group's belief that theirs' is the only true religion and feel the need to suppress other religious views and practices run contrary to true religious tolerance.

Why do people feel the need to convince others that theirs is the only truth? What beliefs, emotions and thoughts are driving their actions? Beliefs are subjective not absolute. People create beliefs to explain their experiences in the world. It is a human survival mechanism to internalize and explain what is happening to them externally.

Arguments become personal when we fail to see the truth that the person or situation in front of us is just a reflection of ourselves. When we are driving home a point to show the supremacy of our arguments, what we are really doing

is trying to convince ourselves of the truth all the while a little voice continues to whisper inside our head that we may be wrong. The truth needs no explanations. It just is. The truth is usually right there in plain sight for everyone to see. When we refuse to see the truth, it is because we don't trust ourselves to acknowledge what it is that we are seeing. We argue and try to convince ourselves that the lie is the truth. That is why arguments are personal, because we really know better.

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