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Thank You For Arguing: What Aristotle, Lincoln, And Homer Simpson Can Teach Us About The Art Of Persuasion



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Synopsis

Thank You for Arguing is your master class in the art of persuasion, taught by professors ranging from Bart Simpson to Winston Churchill. The time-tested secrets the book discloses include Cicero's three-step strategy for moving an audience to action as well as Honest Abe's shameless trick of lowering an audience's expectations by pretending to be unpolished. But it's also replete with contemporary techniques such as politicians' use of "code" language to appeal to specific groups and an eye-opening assortment of popular-culture dodges, including: The Eddie Haskell PloyEminem's Rules of DecorumThe Belushi ParadigmStalin's Timing SecretThe Yoda TechniqueWhether you're an inveterate lover of language books or just want to win a lot more anger-free arguments on the page, at the podium, or over a beer, Thank You for Arguing is for you. Written by one of today's most popular online language mavens, it's warm, witty, erudite, and truly enlightening. It not only teaches you how to recognize a paralipsis and a chiasmus when you hear them, but also how to wield such handy and persuasive weapons the next time you really, really want to get your own way.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have a large collection of persuasion books-some truly excellent-this one is right at the top. I bought it two weeks ago and it's looking much older now-with good reason. This book offers you a choice: allowing you to control the argument or allowing the argument to control you. Jay has made esoteric seeming rhetoric into everyday practicality. Illustrating clearly how we all use elements of

rhetoric in our daily lives, he goes on to demonstrate how to improve and structure it. Arguments, in the true rhetorical sense, become more productive, pleasurable and useful as a result. I wish I'd had this book when I was a teenager; I would love to get my brothers kids to read it-what an advantage they would have, especially in building a career-never mind dodging the fallacious nonsense argued in the media and in politics. Flowing easily from offense, defence, advanced defence-finally culminating in advanced agreement; Jay structures his discussion using ethos, pathos and logos succinctly, weaving tips, anecdotes and everyday examples into every page. The Appendices are well thought out, the first being a total gem. Entitled The Tools, here they are: Goals-Set the tense: * Personal Goal: What do you want from your audience * Audience Goals: Mood, Mind and Willingness to Act. Issue Control: * The past is forensic-guilt and innocence, such as a court case. * The present values-demonstrative-Praise and Blame. * The future-the rhetoric of politics and good argument, what is best for the audience. **Ethos-Argument by character * Decorum-Ability to fit in with the audience's expectations of a trustworthy leader.

This is a useful, well-written book focusing on using the tools of rhetoric to persuade people of things. It's different from most books on rhetoric by emphasizing contemporary, realistic examples - trying to get a promotion, win a client, make a sale, convince someone to vote a certain way - and by focusing on how people really decide things, not on idealistic versions of that. Thus, the author does a very good job of discussing why "decorum", fitting in, is important, and how it is important to know what motivates the other person. And it's different from books on psychology and people-skills, like How to Win Friends and Influence People, because it focuses mainly on rhetoric. The writing is anecdotal and personal, full of jokes, some of them funny, and references to pop culture. I felt the second half of the book became a bit disorganized - it was sometimes not precisely clear to me whether the author was discussing logos, pathos, or ethos, or exactly where a chapter fit into the big scheme of things. But it's certainly well-written. And the book is unquestionably useful, both in identifying and in using rhetorical techniques. Frankly, I wish I'd had this book when I was younger: I used to think persuasion was based entirely on logic. There are many day-to-day interactions and even career decisions that would be greatly aided by knowing the material here. Although the book is entertaining, useful, even important, I nevertheless had a couple complaints. (1) There were a number of errors in the identification and naming of rhetorical figures. Although these errors were likely just due to sloppy editing, I felt they would substantially confuse most readers.

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