



Point-to-Path Coaching Ezine!

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This week's topic: Discussion v. Argument

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Why are religion and politics taboo subjects at work and around family? Well, there are some good reasons why...one is that we're sensitive to offending someone. Another is that those subjects can trigger arguments. But an argument can be a discussion that enlightens us.

In today's environment, especially in America, there are several divisive issues on the table – marriage protection amendment, 2004 election, war in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Catholic Church scandals, etc.

It's hard to talk about these issues with family and co-workers without getting into an argument. I think we do that because we may think the other person is trying to change our opinion or make us feel stupid. We go into a defensive mode to protect our way of thinking, which is attached to our ego.

Arguments can transform into informative, educational discussions. You might learn or teach something, but you don't have to cram it down another person's throat. ***Effective discussion is a graceful dance...***

Listen and respond to the other person's words. Avoid reacting to their emotions.

1. The other person may have a perspective that you have not thought of.
2. Pay attention to what is being said, not how it is being said.
3. Ask, "I'm curious to know more. Can you give some examples of facts to support your opinion?"
4. Ask, "Why do you feel that way?"
5. Acknowledge the other person's point whether or not you agree.

Present your viewpoint as your own and not one others should adopt

1. Put your statements in the first person - I think, I feel, I know or I believe. Not, "Anyone who believes that is an idiot."
2. If you don't have any facts to support your opinion, then don't just make some up. Better to say you don't have any and say it's just your opinion.
3. Allow your listeners to ask questions to further understand your viewpoint.

It's just a discussion. You can openly discuss issues like this in this country. It's your right!