

The Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule of Debate

1 Thou shalt enter a debate to improve thyself, for the purpose of debate is not to prove thy counterpart wrong, but to improve thine own position. For every point thy counterpart makes, thou must either learn what was not known or become even more confident in thine original position.

2 Thou shalt seek a better to be thy counterpart, for there is no glory in challenging those incapable of properly defending themselves. For it is truly written: "Schoolyard bullies do as much with lunch money."

3 Thou shalt agree with thy counterpart with respect to definitions, for communication is not possible between those who do not share a common language, and only a fool would attempt to try.

4 Thou shalt debate thy position only, not that of another, for if thy counterpart wished to debate against the other, then thy counterpart would have sought the other to debate.

5 Thou shalt not debate more than one topic at a time, for to bounce from topic to topic before any is concluded is to show that thou art not prepared to discuss any topic.

6 Thou shalt not offer opinions that canst not be supported by facts, for there is no glory in presenting thyself as an idiot to thy counterpart.

7 Thou shalt not offer feelings for a position. Thy past feelings mean nothing to thy counterpart now, for feelings are unique to each individual, and a particular feeling also a unique event in time and space to that individual's total life experience.

8 Thou shalt admit when thy counterpart hath stumped thee, for it is better to admit thou knowest not enough than to show thou knowest naught.

9 Thou shalt admit when thy counterpart has disproved thy position, for it is better to admit thou art wrong than prove thyself unreasonable.

10 Thou shalt agree to stalemate when all facts are known and reasonable conclusions differ, for only the insane can expect a different outcome by repeating the same process.

The Golden Rule:

Thou shalt, in all things and at all times, express the utmost respect for thy counterpart. For when thou dost express respect to thy counterpart, thou dost obey the commandments. If thou wast to obey the commandments but fail to express respect, then thou hast nowise obeyed the commandments but, instead, circumvented them.

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