

One Recommendation for Being a Good Debater

Quite often we approach a debate as gladiatorial matches in which the goal is to utterly eviscerate our opponents.

But is that always best? Do we lose a little bit of our own humanity when we see individuals or even friends and family members as people to destroy in a discussion? It's true that they may be wrong. It's true that their ideas may be absolutely horrible and could logically lead to all kinds of problems. Yet, they are people after all and you want to win them to you, not turn them away.

It is for that reason that George MacDonald's advice through *The Princess and the Goblin* seems worth sharing:

“‘Seeing is not believing—it is only seeing...But in the

meantime you must be content, I say, to be misunderstood for a while. We are all very anxious to be understood, and it is very hard not to be. But there is one thing much more necessary.'

'What is that, grandmother?'

'To understand other people.'"

Understanding people and empathizing with them is critical. Remember, you can win the argument and lose the debate because of your attitude and how you went about the battle of ideas. Even seeing it as a battle, though it often is, can be problematic.

When you understand people, you will know that there *are* some people who truly are not open to change, they are ideologues or worse. But many other individuals are open to new information. They may not enjoy hearing information that rattles their worldview, but they will listen if, and only if, you go about understanding them and seeking to win them over as a fellow human, not a person to intellectually conquer or destroy.

Maybe this clip is the better example:

