A Practical Guide to Impossible Conversations

Brodie Kaster
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Brodie.Kaster@CASLBoard.com
The Art of Arguing

Thanksgiving Hell

Taboo Topics

The statistics

Grow Up, Bro
After the 2016 Elections
After the 2016 Elections

About me - Are you with us or against us?
After the 2016 Elections

About me - Are you with us or against us?

About my family - the black sheep
After the 2016 Elections

About me - Are you with us or against us?

About my family - the black sheep
Taboo Topics
Taboo Topics

Pro-life vs Pro-choice
Taboo Topics

Pro-life vs Pro-choice

Gun Rights vs Gun Laws
Taboo Topics

Pro-life vs Pro-choice
Gun Rights vs Gun Laws
Business vs Employee
Taboo Topics

Pro-life vs Pro-choice
Gun Rights vs Gun Laws
Business vs Employee
Private Healthcare vs Public Healthcare
Taboo Topics

Pro-life vs Pro-choice

Gun Rights vs Gun Laws

Business vs Employee

Private Healthcare vs Public Healthcare

Citizen Rights vs Immigrant Rights
Taboo Topics

- Pro-life vs Pro-choice
- Gun Rights vs Gun Laws
- Business vs Employee
- Private Healthcare vs Public Healthcare
- Citizen Rights vs Immigrant Rights
- Climate Change
Taboo Topics

- Pro-life vs Pro-choice
- Gun Rights vs Gun Laws
- Business vs Employee
- Private Healthcare vs Public Healthcare
- Citizen Rights vs Immigrant Rights
- Religion vs Climate Change
Taboo Topics

Pro-life vs Pro-choice

Gun Rights vs Gun Laws

Business vs Employee

Private Healthcare vs Public Healthcare

Citizen Rights vs Immigrant Rights

Religion

Climate Change

Freedom vs Equality
The Stats

- **SHARE OF U.S. SOCIAL MEDIA USERS WHO OFTEN DISCUSS POLITICS ON SOCIAL NETWORKS AS OF 2016**
  - 7%

- **SHARE OF U.S. SOCIAL MEDIA USERS WHO NEVER DISCUSS POLITICS ON SOCIAL NETWORKS AS OF 2016**
  - 50%

- **SHARE OF U.S. SOCIAL MEDIA USERS WHOSE FACEBOOK FRIENDS HAD MOSTLY SIMILAR POLITICAL BELIEFS AS OF 2016**
  - 23%

And...

Why it's important
Most Americans say political debate in the U.S. has become less respectful, fact-based, substantive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>More negative</th>
<th>Not changed</th>
<th>More positive</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less respectful</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less fact-based</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less focused on issues</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less entertaining</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% who say Donald Trump has changed the tone and nature of political debate in the U.S. ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>For the worse</th>
<th>Not changed</th>
<th>For the better</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
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Note: No answer responses not shown.
PEW RESEARCH CENTER
BEING TAUGHT TO AVOID TALKING ABOUT POLITICS AND RELIGION HAS LED TO A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF POLITICS AND RELIGION.

WHAT WE SHOULD HAVE BEEN Taught WAS HOW TO HAVE A CIVIL CONVERSATION ABOUT A DIFFICULT TOPIC.

ANONYMOUS
This is how we argue now
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An argument
An argument

We cannot control the other person
An argument

We cannot control the other person

Flat Earthers
An argument

We cannot control the other person
Flat Earthers

Stop trying to win
An argument

We cannot control the other person
  Flat Earthers

Stop trying to win
  Seek Understanding
An argument

We cannot control the other person
  Flat Earthers

Stop trying to win
  Seek Understanding

Assume good-intent, different values
An argument

We cannot control the other person
Flat Earthers

Stop trying to win
Seek Understanding

Assume good-intent, different values
Freedom vs Equality
Our Beliefs and Values

Confirmation Bias
Our Beliefs and Values

Shaped by our experiences

Confirmation Bias
Our Beliefs and Values

Shaped by our experiences
Growing up gay in a small town
Our Beliefs and Values

Shaped by our experiences
Growing up gay in a small town

Shaped by our community and the people closest to us
Our Beliefs and Values

Shaped by our experiences
Growing up gay in a small town

Shaped by our community and the people closest to us
Who shaped how you think? How?
Our Beliefs and Values

Shaped by our experiences
Growing up gay in a small town

Shaped by our community and the people closest to us
Who shaped how you think? How?
Don’t insult that
Our Beliefs and Values

Shaped by our experiences
Growing up gay in a small town

Shaped by our community and the people closest to us
Who shaped how you think? How?
Don’t insult that

Do NOT assume your conversation partner is stupid, uninformed, or ignorant

Confirmation Bias
OBJECTIVE FACTS

WHAT CONFRMYS YOUR BELIEFS

WHAT YOU SEE
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The Basics

See it in action

Example
1. Goals - why?
The Basics

1. Goals - why?
2. Partnerships - not adversaries

See it in action

Example
The Basics

1. Goals - why?
2. Partnerships - not adversaries
3. Rapport - maintain good connection
The Basics

1. Goals - why?
2. Partnerships - not adversaries
3. Rapport - maintain good connection
4. Listen - Listen more, talk less
The Basics

1. Goals - why?
2. Partnerships - not adversaries
3. Rapport - maintain good connection
4. Listen - Listen more, talk less
5. Don't deliver your truth
The Basics

1. Goals - why?
2. Partnerships - not adversaries
3. Rapport - maintain good connection
4. Listen - Listen more, talk less
5. Don't deliver your truth
6. Remember good intentions
The Basics

1. Goals - why?
2. Partnerships - not adversaries
3. Rapport - maintain good connection
4. Listen - Listen more, talk less
5. Don't deliver your truth
6. Remember good intentions
7. Walk away
I've experienced homelessness, I've known what it is like to have absolutely nothing.
I've experienced homelessness, I've known what it is like to have absolutely nothing.
Great, so I can tolerate Aunt Barb or Stephen in front of Trader Joe's
Great, so I can tolerate Aunt Barb or Stephen in front of Trader Joe's.

Works in relationships.
Great, so I can tolerate Aunt Barb or Stephen in front of Trader Joe's

Works in relationships
Works with students

A Bit Heavier
Great, so I can tolerate Aunt Barb or Stephen in front of Trader Joe's

Works in relationships
Works with students
Works with Admin

A Bit Heavier
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Steps to Productive Conversation

See it
You try
Steps to Productive Conversation

1. Modeling
Steps to Productive Conversation

1. Modeling
2. Words

See it
You try
Steps to Productive Conversation

1. Modeling
2. Words
3. Ask Questions
Steps to Productive Conversation

1. Modeling
2. Words
3. Ask Questions
4. Acknowledge Extremists
Steps to Productive Conversation

1. Modeling
2. Words
3. Ask Questions
4. Acknowledge Extremists
5. Navigating Social Media
Steps to Productive Conversation

1. Modeling
2. Words
3. Ask Questions
4. Acknowledge Extremists
5. Navigating Social Media
6. Discuss Contributions, avoid blame
Steps to Productive Conversation

1. Modeling
2. Words
3. Ask Questions
4. Acknowledge Extremists
5. Navigating Social Media
6. Discuss Contributions, avoid blame
7. Focus on epistemology
Steps to Productive Conversation

1. Modeling
2. Words
3. Ask Questions
4. Acknowledge Extremists
5. Navigating Social Media
6. Discuss Contributions, avoid blame
7. Focus on epistemology

8. Learn
Taboo Topics

- Pro-life vs Pro-choice
- Gun Rights vs Gun Laws
- Business vs Employee
- Private Healthcare vs Public Healthcare
- Citizen Rights vs Immigrant Rights
- Religion
- Climate Change

Freedom vs Equality
Topics

Level 1
- Dogs vs Cats
- Android vs iPhone
- Coffee vs Tea
- Beer vs Wine
- Dine In vs Delivery
- Book vs Ebook
- Perfect Teeth vs Perfect Hair
- Antique vs Brand New
- Hot Coffee vs Iced Coffee
- Mountains vs Beach
- Sunset vs Sunrise

Level 2
- Working Alone vs On A Team
- Toilet Paper: Over vs Under
- Call vs Text
- Save vs Spend
- Marry Then Move In vs Live-In Relationship Before Marriage
- Abstinence vs Sex Before Marriage

Level 3
- Pro-Life vs Pro-Choice
- Tax-cuts vs Government programs
- Immigrant rights vs Citizen rights
- Religion vs LGBTQ marriage
- #MeToo movement
- Black Lives Matter
- Policing of minorities
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