

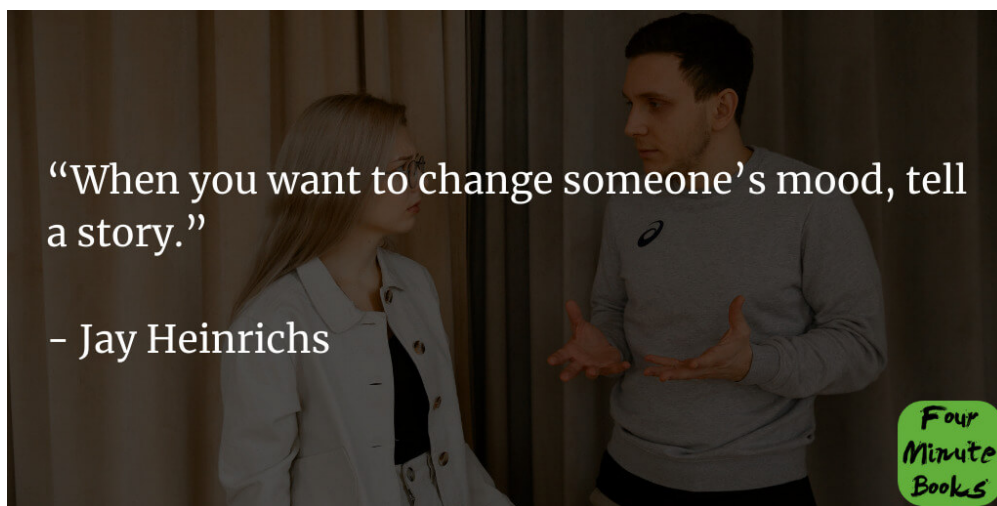
# Thank You For Arguing Summary

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**1-Sentence-Summary:** *Thank You For Arguing* outlines the importance of arguments and rhetoric and teaches you how to persuade other people by setting clear goals for your conversations, identifying core issues, using logic, being the kind of person that can win arguments, and much more.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



When I ask you to picture an argument, what do you think of? Is it a couple in the kitchen yelling at each other? Many of us think of arguments merely as verbal attacks full of frustration or hatred. But arguments used to have a higher purpose than this.

Originally, arguments were seen as an efficient way for two people or parties to reach a conclusion together. Sure, they would still get heated, but they weren't rooted in spite. When we see them as a way to make a claim and form a consensus, this is when they become the most useful to us.

In *Thank You For Arguing: What Aristotle, Lincoln, and Homer Simpson Can Teach Us About the Art of Persuasion*, Jay Heinrichs gives you a crash course on the lost art of arguing. By looking at everyone from ancient Greek philosophers to recent politicians, you can learn how to debate and persuade like a pro.

These are 3 of the best lessons the book teaches:

1. If you argue then it's a sign that you're human.
2. Getting to a resolution starts with identifying core issues.

3. Want to win an argument? Figure out the shortcomings in your opponents' logic and use those against them.

Let's jump right in and get learning!

## **Lesson 1: Arguments are an important part of being human, and they do everything from influencing our attitude to guiding our decisions.**

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The art of argumentation, also known as *rhetoric*, is much more than a screaming match between two angry people. It traces back to ancient Greece and involves skills that help the arguer effectively persuade others.

You might think this sounds like an outdated idea, but even today rhetoric is probably shaping the way you think without you even realizing it. To the ancient Greeks, this idea was so important that it was the foundation of their education. They practiced rhetoric by making arguments. Today we experience these arguments all around us in books, courtrooms, and during political arguments.

There is a misconception that an argument has to come to an agreement. However, the goal needs to be a consensus. A consensus means there is a shared faith in the outcome. **In short, the goal of an argument shouldn't be to win but rather to win your audience over.**

When comparing couples who broke up versus had long-lasting marriages, professor John Gottman found both had the same amount of disputes. The difference, however, was the couples whose marriages lasted solved their issues by reaching a shared outcome. So simply put, they argued, while the couples who broke up just fought.

What we can learn here is that coming into an argument just to win isn't a good way to argue. So what's the better way? Greek philosopher Aristotle believed we should use the art of seduction, which he thought was the strongest argumentation. Through seducing your audience, you can persuade them to want the same thing as you and you can reach a consensus.

## **Lesson 2: Identify core issues first to reach a cordial resolution.**

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Have you ever been in an argument and there just seemed like there was no way out? The author teaches the reason arguments come to an end without a resolution is because the people arguing are debating two separate core issues.

Aristotle believed every argument was based on one of three issues. First, there is blame. For example, this is something like "Who left the milk out on the counter?" Second, there are values. An example of this would be, "Should the death penalty be legal?" Lastly, there are

arguments on choice, which we see in questions like, “Does it make sense to relocate to Japan?”

So why should we bother identifying which type of argument we’re dealing with? Because if we don’t, we can’t come to a positive outcome. Aristotle believed each of the three types of argument corresponded to a different tense. **Blame corresponded to the past, values to present, and choice to future.**

For example, if a wife is trying to convince her husband to turn his music down, she might criticize him for playing the Rolling Stones too loudly. The husband responds, “You just hate my music, that’s what this is about.” The woman’s mistake here is that she made an argument about choice (turning music down) into an argument over values (whether the Rolling Stones are good or bad).

In an argument like this, it can help to focus on the present, or choice. So instead of focusing on the present, or the merits of the music, the woman could focus on the future. She could say something like, “Would it be okay if I turned it down or we listen to something else?” This keeps the argument to choice, which will allow for a resolution.

Henrichs says the easiest way to find a resolution is to ensure you are speaking in the same tense.

### **Lesson 3: Figure out the shortcomings of your opponent’s argument to use to your advantage.**

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All of us can probably relate to being convinced of purchasing something against our better judgment by a slick salesman. Salespeople are effective because they use some of the most notorious rhetorical tricks out there.

Two of these sneaky traps are bad logic and false comparisons. An example of this is the classic “But all of the other kids are doing it!” Many parents quickly respond to this with the equally classic and poor logic rebuttal, “And if all the other kids jumped off a cliff, would you follow them?”

Another strategy is to hurl insults at those arguing against them. If this happens to you, fight back by attaching positive connotations to their labels. Politicians often do this.

**For example, if someone says you’re a liberal hippie, you can say that if caring for people makes you a liberal hippie, then yes, you are a liberal hippie.** In doing this, you flip the tables and put your opponent on the defensive.

Lastly, Heinrichs warns to keep on the lookout for bad examples. It’s usually fairly easy to spot a bad example because it’s usually disconnected from the point it’s trying to prove.

For example, if someone reads about a plane crash and they say they won't go on planes anymore, they are using one rare example to argue about the safety of planes.

## **Thank You For Arguing Review**

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What a fantastic book. So many people would do a lot better in life if they just knew about and followed what *Thank You For Arguing* teaches. This has got to be one of the most influential books I've discovered about this subject and one that I'll definitely come back to again and again.

## **Who would I recommend the Thank You For Arguing summary to?**

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The 47-year-old who spends too much time fighting with strangers on the internet, the 32-year-old couple that's tired of their fights escalating, and anyone that wants less contention and more solutions in their lives.