The science of influencing people, two ways to win an argument

"I am quite sure now that often, very often, in matters of religion and politics a man's reasoning powers are not above the monkey's, " wrote Mark Twain.

Having written a book about our most common reasoning errors, I would argue that Twain was being rather *uncharitable* — to monkeys. Whether we are discussing Trump or Brexit, we have all come across people who appear to have *next to* no understanding of world events — but who talk with the *utmost* confidence and *conviction*.

uncharitable 严厉的；无情的	next to 几乎
utmost 极度的	conviction 坚信

Fortunately, recent psychological research offers evidence-based ways towards achieving more *fruitful* discussions.

fruitful   富有成效的；多产的

Ask 'how' rather than 'why'

A simple but powerful way of deflating someone's argument is to ask for more detail.

It's important to note that simply asking why people supported or opposed the policy — without requiring them to explain how it works — had no effect, since those reasons could be shallower with little detail. You need to ask how something works to get the effect.

If you are debating the merits of a no-deal Brexit, you might ask someone to describe exactly how the UK's international trade would change under WTO terms.

Reframe the issue

reframe   再构造；重新框架

Each of our beliefs is deeply rooted in a much broader and more complex political ideology. Attacking one issue may therefore threaten to *unravel* someone's whole *worldview*.

unravel　解开；拆散　　　　　　　　　　　　worldview　世界观

You are not going to alter someone's whole political ideology in one discussion, so a better strategy is to *disentangle* the issue at hand from their broader beliefs, or to explain how the facts can still be accommodated into their worldview.

disentangle　解决；松开

A free-market capitalist who denies global warming might be far more *receptive* to the evidence if you explain that the development of renewable energies could lead to technological breakthroughs and generate economic growth.

receptive　能接受的