

# They Say I Say - Chapter 4 Summary

## "Yes/ No/ Okay, But"

Three Ways to Respond

### Quoting with Purpose

"the 'I say' stage, in which you offer your own argument as a response to what 'they' have said."

Most common ways to respond to others ideas:

1. Agreeing
2. Disagreeing
3. Some Combination of 1 and 2

### Only Three Ways to Respond?

It can be important to avoid overly complex writing in order to prevent departing from conventional ways of thinking and making it more difficult for the reader to fully comprehend your argument.

Start simplistically so that the reader can easily understand what you mean with things like:

I agree that \_\_\_\_, but I cannot agree that \_\_\_\_.

"the best interpretations take strong stands relative to other interpretations"

### Disagree - And Explain Why

It's not enough to just disagree with something. You have to take it a step further and contribute something new to your disagreement.

"To turn [a disagreement] into an argument, you need to give reasons to support what you say"

If something presented is overly obvious, then you can use the *"duh"* approach:

"You can even disagree by making [the *"duh"*] move, in which you disagree not with the position itself but with the assumption that it is a new or stunning revelation."

More directly put, if you find yourself thinking "No Shit" then say it:

"X presents Y, but of course we all know X."

### Templates for Disagreeing, with reasons

X is mistaken because she overlooks \_\_\_\_.

X's claim that \_\_\_\_ rests upon the questionable assumption that \_\_\_\_.

I disagree with X's view that \_\_\_\_ because, as recent research has shown, \_\_\_\_.

X contradicts herself/can't have it both ways. On the one hand, she argues \_\_\_\_.

On the other hand, she also says \_\_\_\_.

By focusing on \_\_\_\_, X overlooks the deeper problem of \_\_\_\_.

It's better to state your disagreements in "frank and considerate ways", rather than avoiding making them at all.

## Agree - But with a Difference

"Even as you're agreeing, it's important to bring something new and fresh to the table, adding something that makes you a valuable participant in the conversation."

Even if you agree with something, there are lots of ways for you to contribute to the conversation.

## Templates for Agreeing

I agree that \_\_\_\_ because my experience \_\_\_\_ confirms it.

X is surely right about \_\_\_\_ because, as she may not be aware, recent studies have shown that \_\_\_\_.

X's theory of \_\_\_\_ is extremely useful because it sheds light on the difficult problem of \_\_\_\_.

Those unfamiliar with this school of thought may be interested to know that it basically boils down to \_\_\_\_.

I agree that \_\_\_\_, a point that needs emphasizing since so many people still believe \_\_\_\_.

If group X is right that \_\_\_\_, as I think they are, then we need to reassess the popular assumption that \_\_\_\_.

## Agree and Disagree Simultaneously

"agreeing and disagreeing simultaneously [helps] us get beyond the kind of 'is too' / 'is not' exchanges that characterize the disputes of young children and the more polarized shouting matches of talk radio and TV."

## Templates for Agree and Disagree Simultaneously

The first one stresses your agreement, while the second stresses your disagreement.

Although I agree with X up to a point, I cannot accept his overriding assumption that \_\_\_\_.

Although I disagree with much that X says, I fully endorse his final conclusion that \_\_\_\_.

Though I concede that \_\_\_\_, I still insist that \_\_\_\_.

X is right that \_\_\_\_, but she seems on more dubious ground when she claims that \_\_\_\_.

While X is probably wrong when she claims that \_\_\_\_, she is right that \_\_\_\_.

Whereas X provides ample evidence that \_\_\_\_, Y and Z's research on \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ convinces me that \_\_\_\_ instead.

I'm of two minds about X's claim that \_\_\_\_.

On the one hand, I agree that \_\_\_\_.

On the other hand, I'm not sure if \_\_\_\_\_.  
My feelings on the issue are mixed. I do support X's position that \_\_\_\_\_. but I  
find Y's argument about \_\_\_\_\_ and Z's research on \_\_\_\_\_ to be equally persuasive.