

Modern debate abandons facts

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“No administration has accomplished more in the first 90 days,” Donald Trump said recently during a rally.

What should have been a fairly straightforward claim to substantiate quickly turned into a pseudo-debate involving inane comparisons to predecessors and political opponents.

Instead of trying to honestly separate fact from fiction, our discourse often disintegrates into a shouting match between people who already have their minds made up; getting to the truth often seems superfluous.

Consequently, I have come to the conclusion most people have no clue how to legitimately debate an issue or otherwise engage in meaningful critical dialogue. So let me attempt to explain how this should work.

When someone makes a claim, they are responsible for providing evidence substantiating the claim. If the person is able to verify the claim, we can conclude the claim is valid.

If, on the other hand, the person making the claim cannot corroborate its authenticity, then we can conclude the claim is false and the person making the claim is a liar.

Moreover, questioning the credibility or motives of those challenging the person making the claim is not an appropriate response; nor is pointing out their deficiencies.

For example, if I say, “You forgot to pick up the kids from school.” A proper response might be “Yes, I did. I’m sorry.” Or perhaps “No, I didn’t. But I dropped them at grandma’s house.”

A duplicitous response would be: “Hey, you forgot the kids once, too.” Or maybe “Well, you’re not perfect, either.” Please note these responses have nothing to do with the original statement and only serve to deflect attention from the real issue.

The person making a claim has the innate and ultimate responsibility to prove the claim. What someone else did or did not do in the past is completely irrelevant.

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