

Have you ever had a disagreement, or fought with your friends or family? We've all encountered this sort of situation, right? In resolving arguments, standing in someone else's shoes is very important. Today, let me introduce to you how one of my hobbies helps me stand in many people's shoes.

Since I was a 1st grader in middle school, I have been doing something called debates. There is a common misconception that debates are just about "refuting", and dismantling your opponent's arguments. However, this is completely untrue. While countering arguments is part of the process, the ultimate aim is to sway judges through well-crafted and compelling arguments. Debate is a very deep competition, a blend of not only knowledge, but also logical thinking, and a sprinkle of imagination. Although there are many "Styles" to debates, the fundamentals are the same. A topic is released, and you are assigned to either the supporting or opposing team. The catch here is that you don't get the option of picking a side. After everything is released, you have some time to prepare, and then you have to present your argument, as logically and compellingly as possible.

Although, as you can imagine, you can gain a lot of abilities through debating, I would like to spotlight one skill in particular: "multilateral thinking". This skill is about embracing multiple perspectives, and understanding the thoughts and feelings of others. Since you don't get to pick sides in debates, you sometimes have to come up with reasons to support something you actually oppose. Through practicing, I was able to hone my skill of multilateral thinking, and it is now invaluable in my daily life; especially when it comes to resolving disputes.

Let me give you an example, based on my true experience at a school club meeting. I am in the wind orchestra at school, and the meeting was held to discuss the direction we want to take the club before an upcoming competition. The club members were divided. On one hand, many club members prioritized success and good ratings in the competition, and were willing to endure going through rigorous practice. On the other hand, some members would rather enjoy the process of practicing itself. Although my idea was that we should rather put performing well in front of enjoying the practice, I did understand where the opposing people were coming from. Faced with this impasse, where both sides weren't willing to budge, I decided to step in. Thanks to my debating experience, I was able to think and speak impartially, almost as if I were an outsider listening in to the heated discussion. I was able to analyze and distill the "arguments" coming from both sides. The pivotal point I want to note here is that I was able to speak objectively, as, if not, it'll just lead to the further escalation of an already existing rift. Through this, I was able to help my members understand each other, which led to acceptance and thus, a resolution: a way that works for all of us. A way we could enjoy practice, while also executing it correctly.

Through debates, I was trained to think of one topic from different aspects and angles, which really helped the meeting move forward in a better direction. I believe that the true resolution of arguments—a resolution that is satisfactory to all parties involved—requires some compromises. However, for people to be willing to compromise, they have to accept and understand where the conflicting viewpoints are being expressed. We could clearly see this in the example I shared, a quintessential human trait. My multilateral thinking, nurtured through debates, plays an indispensable role in both understanding and fostering understanding, directly helping to achieve a true settlement of a disagreement.

In conclusion, debating has enriched my ability to understand viewpoints and contribute to resolving disputes. By nurturing this skill, we can cultivate understanding and pave the way for compromise, harmony, and peace. So the next time you get stuck in a fierce argument, why not step back, and try stepping in someone else's shoes?

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Stepping into Someone Else's Shoes