

ALLERGY, NOTEWORTHY, PHILOSOPHY

THE DARK ARTS OF DEBATE – AND HOW TO COUNTER THEM

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In my career I have experienced all kind of situations where reason often loses not to better logic but to tactics.

Pigeon Chess

One such tactic is pigeon chess . arguing with someone who disregards all rules of reasoning. Like the proverbial pigeon knocking over the chess pieces, they make noise, strut, and claim victory.

Engaging them rarely yields clarity; it only creates chaos.

Sealioning

This is subtler: endless polite questions asked not to learn, but to exhaust. It mimics curiosity, but its aim is delay, not understanding.

When faced with it, ask for sincerity—“Are you asking to discuss or to debate?”

Gish Galloping

The Chewbacca, borrowed from satire, floods the room with irrelevant noise. It works by confusing, not convincing.

Gish Galloping is its cousin: a barrage of weak arguments fired faster than one can refute. Both rely on overwhelming the listener rather than enlightening them.

Silencing

Silencing is the most insidious of all, discouraging speech through mockery or mobbing. It creates fear where there should be dialogue. It creates emptiness that is filled with new opponent arguments.

To counter these tactics, remember: calm is your armor, clarity your weapon. Refuse to chase every false lead—focus on one point, and hold it steady. Ask for definitions, sources,

and limits to the discussion. And when reason cannot prevail, step back rather than sink into the mud.

In the end, not every debate deserves our participation.

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