1.8: Winning by Losing

Ask yourself this question, "What do you “win” when you win an argument? Besides a boost to your personal ego, what do you actually win when you defeat another person in an argument? Now, what do you win when you “lose” an argument? You could win additional knowledge, new insights into the topic you are arguing leading to personal growth.

In a TED Talk, Philosopher Daniel H. Cohen, argues the importance of losing an argument.

"There is a concept in Judaism that I have always really loved, which is that arguments should be "Ishem shamayim," literally "in the name of heaven." The broader concept is that the goal of an argument should be to reveal or explore a truth that's larger and more important than the egos of the arguing parties. When an argument is Ishem shamayim, it's worth returning to and studying, even once a clear winner has been established -- as one does with important, precedent-setting legal cases.

When I find myself in an argument, I always stop to consider whether I'm arguing for the sake of being right or arguing for the sake of illuminating the truth. I think it's a helpful self-check, with or without the religious context."

Dan Cohen ¹

Only when you can express your disagreements using your critical thinking skills can you really take charge of your life and gain a measure of control over your decision-making environment. In this complex, highly technical world, it is really impossible, undesirable and counterproductive to run away from conflict and argument. A more rewarding approach would be to be able to tackle conflict and deal with it in a constructive and rewarding manner.

The skills and information offered to you in this book are designed to help you increase the validity of the decisions you do make.
Reference