9.7: Resisting Change

As normal human beings, we want to maintain our comfortable beliefs and so we naturally resist change or any challenge to our existing beliefs and attitudes. As a critical thinker, however, we know this leads to dogmatic thinking. So, we are in a constant fight between our natural urge not to change and our skill at critical thinking that tells us to be open to new ideas.

When we attempt to persuade others, we need to present an argument that actually creates a feeling of discomfort in their currently held beliefs. This discomfort leads to a tension. We would like this tension to lead to a change in their minds, but since humans want to be comfortable they strive to resolve the tension they feel without changing their minds. One theory that has looked at this process is the Theory of Cognitive Dissonance.