

The Diplomatic Man's Checklist: 12 Strategies for Political Debates That Deepen Friendships

- a) **Separate Ideas from Identity**
- b) **Love the Person, Challenge the Belief**
- c) **Stick to the Facts**
- d) **Practice Active Listening**
- e) **Use "I" Statements**
- f) **Ask Genuine Questions**
- g) **Find Common Ground**
- h) **Manage Your Emotions**
- i) **Avoid Name-Calling and Labels**
- j) **Be Open to Learning**
- k) **Use Humor Wisely**
- l) **End on a Positive Note**

1. Separate Ideas from Identity

- Recognize that a person's beliefs are not their entire identity
- Focus on discussing the idea, not attacking the person

2. Love the Person, Challenge the Belief

- Affirm your care for the person before disagreeing
- Use phrases like "I value our friendship, even when we disagree"

3. Stick to the Facts

- Base your arguments on verifiable information
- Avoid emotional manipulation or exaggeration

4. Practice Active Listening

- Give your full attention when others are speaking
- Summarize their points to ensure understanding

5. Use "I" Statements

- Express your views as personal opinions, not universal truths
- Say "I believe" or "In my experience" instead of making absolute statements

6. Ask Genuine Questions

- Seek to understand their perspective with open-ended questions
- Avoid leading or loaded questions that may feel confrontational

7. Find Common Ground

- Identify shared values or goals, even if methods differ
- Use these commonalities as a foundation for productive dialogue

8. Manage Your Emotions

- Take deep breaths if you feel yourself getting heated
- Suggest a break if emotions are running too high

9. Avoid Name-Calling and Labels

- Refrain from using derogatory terms or political labels
- Address specific ideas or policies, not broad generalizations

10. Be Open to Learning

- Approach the conversation as an opportunity to gain new insights
- Be willing to admit when you don't know something or may be wrong

11. Use Humor Wisely

- Employ light-hearted jokes to ease tension, but avoid sarcasm
- Be careful not to use humor at the expense of others' beliefs

12. End on a Positive Note

- Express gratitude for the conversation, regardless of the outcome
- Reaffirm your respect and care for the person
- Suggest a non-political activity to do together in the future