

GUIDE

For Productive Disagreements

Adapted from *Why Are We Yelling: The Art of Productive Disagreements*
By Buster Benson



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Join The Disagreement Appreciation Society!

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Appreciate disagreements as opportunities for growth, connection, and enjoyment instead of as problems that need to be squashed.

This guide is an adaptation from the book, *Why Are We Yelling: The Art of Productive Disagreements*, by Buster Benson.

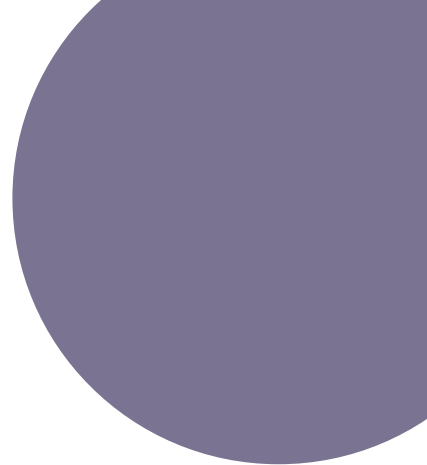
Benson's book is a compilation of the communicative knowledge he developed while leading some of the highest performing teams at Amazon, Twitter, Slack, and Patreon.

His knowledge has been adapted as a guide to help social media users manage disagreements online. But don't stop with this guide. Please, check out his book!

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01



Watch How Anxiety Sparks

These sparks are the discomfort we feel when other people say and do things that don't align with our own perspective or preferences.

Notice the difference between big sparks and small sparks. These are signposts to our own internal map of dangerous ideas that we develop from our biases, stereotypes of others, and fears.

If left unchecked, we project these harsh judgments unfairly onto others. Work with it.

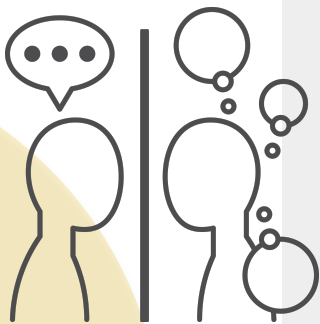
02

Develop An Honest Bias

Contrary to popular belief, there is **no cure for bias**. We **CAN** develop an honest relationship with our own bias with self-reflection, frequent requests for thoughtful feedback, and a willingness to address feedback directly, however it comes.

03

Talk To Your Internal Voices



This is about self-reflection. Most of us have internal voices that help us resolve conflicts in the moment (power, reason, and avoidance). We inherit these internal guides from our culture. But these solutions are only temporary.

Each voice creates shadowy side effects that stick around and eventually come back to reverse some or all of the progress made. Get to know yours so you can recognize their suggestions as merely suggestions, not orders.

Know Your Internal Voices

Voice of Power

Creates resentment and polarization because it restricts options from being considered.

*“It’s **MY** way or the highway!”*

Voice of Reason

Takes shortcuts for practicality and efficiency; accepts that high-cost, low-impact issues can be prioritized.

“I really need to work on my communication skills. But, I can just have A.I. type my comments for me, right?”

Voice of Avoidance

Chooses not to participate in an issue to enjoy short-term relief from the anxiety of conflict.

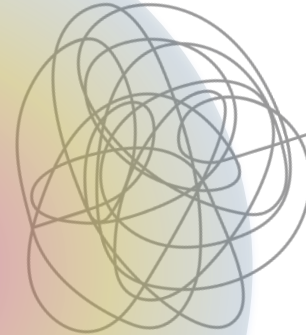
*“Nope! I’m not dealing with this sh*t!”*

Voice of Possibilities

Most of us also have a quiet internal voice that leads to the voice of possibilities. Listen to it. The voice of possibility is the voice that will help you most when you feel you're at a dead end. It's always looking for what we've missed.

03

*Talk To Your Internal
Voices*



04

Speak For Yourself

Don't speculate about others, especially groups that you don't belong to. Instead, invite members of any group you might otherwise speculate about to your social media thread to speak for themselves. Listen generously.

05



*Ask Questions that
Invite Surprising
Answers*

Think of big, wide-open questions that create space for different perspectives to be heard. Measure the quality of your questions by the honest, meaningful response that they draw out from the person answering them.

06

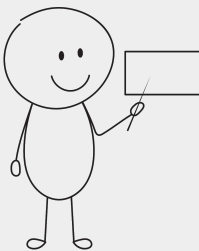
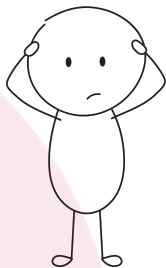
Build Arguments Together

Invite people to discuss problems and opportunities. Let people propose ways to address them and stay open-minded to diverse perspectives. People will disagree; that's great! Use them!

Use disagreement and opposing views to identify and discuss blind spots in the different perspectives, problems, opportunities, and proposed solutions. You probably won't get any closure to answers, but you'll likely be surprised to discover something meaningful.

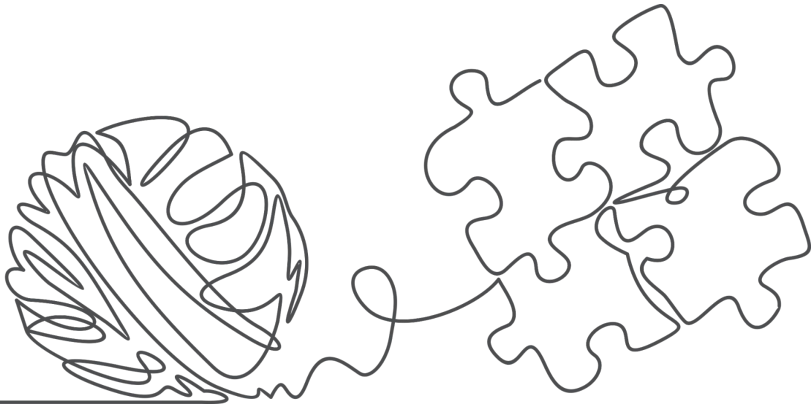
08

*Accept Reality,
Then Participate
In It*



We can't change reality from the realm of wishful thinking and willful blindness. We can't hide from dangerous ideas. We're right in the mess with all of it, getting ourselves dirty. The only way out is through.

The goal of all of this is not to come out of disagreements comfortably, but to get into them and embrace the struggle.



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*The best things in life
don't come easily.*

Guidelines for Productive Communication

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Thank
You!

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