

# Decorum In Discussion

## Summary of Robert's Rules of Order for Debate

Do not attack the motives of others.

Wrong: "Those people hate American and want to ruin the country".

Right: "The effect of that policy will be to ruin the country".

Wrong: "That is a lie". (This implies a statement motivated by dishonesty)

Right: "I believe there is evidence that the delegate is mistaken" or

"I believe a better source for the facts of the matter is . . ."

Discuss ideas, not people.

Wrong: "There you go again with your crazy ideas, as usual" or

"You can't listen to anything he says, he's an idiot"

Right: "That policy will increase unemployment".

Avoid using names of other people.

Wrong: "What John is saying doesn't make any sense".

Right: "I don't agree with the statement made before that . . ."

Avoid the use of "you". It is confrontational.

Wrong: "I just don't agree with you. What you said is not right".

Right: I disagree with the opinion stated that . . ." or

"I don't agree with the member's statement"

Avoid emotionally laden language

Wrong: "That is the dumbest idea I ever heard".

Right: "That policy will have harmful effects, such as . . ."

See RONR (12<sup>th</sup> ed.) 43:19