

Know These Six Fallacies Especially

Circular Argument: Restating something as a way of supporting it: "Golf is a great sport for senior citizens because many older people play it." A formal way of saying "Because I told you so! That is why!"

Argument ad Hominem: In its most basic form—*an insult*. Instead of criticizing *what* someone says, you attack the person in a way unrelated to the issue: "You cannot trust what Vice-President Cheney says about Iraq. He is a chicken hawk who received four draft deferments and never wore a uniform!"

Hasty Generalization: Trying to make the exception into the rule: "I have seen the lives of my friends ruined by alcohol. We should return to prohibition in this country!" OR: "Pat Robertson called for the assassination of the president of Venezuela. All those fundamentalist Christians are wack-jobs."

Either/Or Fallacy: When someone claims there are only two choices, when actually there are more: "Either the Bible is the literal Word of God or it is a sham, a hoax, a lie and should be burned." OR: "You are either for us or against us!"

Non Sequitur: When a statement is supported by weak or irrelevant reasons: "Scuba diving is a risky sport, but everything in life involves a risk. Every time you get in a car you are taking a risk. If you drive a car, you should be willing to go scuba diving."

Appeal to the Crowd: Saying that something is correct because many other people believe it too. Or saying something is wrong because few others believe it: "But officer, you cannot give me a ticket; other cars were going this speed too!" OR: "But, Mommy! All the other kids are getting tattoos!"