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Why duplicity is a debate winner

Rhys Blakely, Science Correspondent

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To win others over in an argument it is important that they do not consider you an opponent, according to scientists

ALAMY

Forget bombarding opponents with facts and impassioned rhetoric. A new study suggests that winning an argument demands an altogether sneakier tactic: you must present yourself as a potential ally.

Scientists have found that a part of the brain involved in forming opinions becomes disengaged when we debate with somebody with whom we have decided we disagree. Neural circuitry involved with processing fresh evidence seems to grind to a halt, making it less likely that we will change our mind.

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