

Let's start with team work.

It's often said that 'There is no I in team' (conveniently forgetting that there is a 'me'). Team work is about putting the interests of the team above your own. Your objective as a team member is not to make people listen with awe, admiration or even laughter to your speech; it is to win the debate. So here are some basic principles for team work as a debater, which will help you to win debates together:

- Analyse honestly your own strengths and weaknesses as a debater, and discuss them with your partner(s). Think about how your strengths can balance her / his / their weaknesses and vice versa.
- When preparing together, make sure you all have more or less equal air time. Don't be too dominating in discussion; but don't be too quiet either.
- Divide up the points for your speeches between you clearly and stick to that division. Make sure not to repeat your partner's points or, worse, contradict them.
- When your partner is speaking, look interested: nod approvingly, make a serious face at the serious points, shake your head when she condemns something, laugh when she makes a joke. This will be encouraging for her, and may also subliminally influence the judge.
- Have a stack of index cards on the table in front of you during a debate. If, while your partner is speaking, she needs a key fact, or you can see a useful point she could make, write her a note on a card and pass it to her. (Speaking to your partner while she is speaking is not allowed, but passing notes is.)
- Always congratulate your partner after a speech, however it has gone. Use back slaps / high fives / hugs as appropriate. Analysis of what went wrong can wait till later.

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