

Just as we know our fire chiefs would call up additional firefighters to contain a spreading fire, we must give our troops in Baghdad the chance to suppress violence and stabilize the region, which protects American families. In conclusion, God bless our troops and we will never forget September the 11th.

Todd Akin, a Republican from Missouri, used an historical analogy, comparing what we are doing in Iraq to defending the Alamo:

Picture Davy Crockett at the Alamo. He has his back to the wall. Santa Ana has got thousands of troops. So he gets his BlackBerry out. He checks with Congress. Congress says, "Hey, Davy, we really support you, but we're not going to send you any troops." That doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me.

ARGUMENT FROM NARRATIVE

A final method of reasoning uses *narrative*—proving a point by telling a story. Consider the example of Frederick Douglass as he provided persuasive proof of the horrors of slavery. In the following section of his *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, he is describing his master, Captain Anthony (Douglass said he never knew his master's first name):

He was a cruel man, hardened by a long life of slave-holding. He would at times seem to take great pleasure in whipping a slave. I have often been awakened at the dawn of day by the most heart-rending shrieks of an own aunt of mine, whom he used to tie up to a joist, and whip upon her naked back till she was literally covered with blood. No words, no tears, no prayers, from his gory victim, seemed to move his iron heart from its bloody purpose. The louder she screamed, the harder he whipped; and where the blood ran fastest, there he whipped longest. He would whip her to make her scream, and whip her to make her hush; and not until overcome by fatigue, would he cease to swing the blood-clotted cowskin.

The narrative approach works by asking the listener to identify with the plight of the person described in the story. But narrative also has some key disadvantages. First, telling stories takes a lot of time—something that is a scarce commodity in most debates. Second, stories offer only a single example of a problem. Few stories carry the emotional power of the Douglass narrative; most narratives can be answered rather simply by pointing out examples in support of the opposing case. Third, narratives appeal more at the emotional than a logical level. When debate judges are forced to choose between logical support and emotional appeal, most side with the logical support.