

ity but on different kinds of warrants, warrants tied to evidence about the politician rather than to the opinion of a celebrity being used as a political authority.

- 3. Is the person trustworthy?** Trustworthiness is related to a person's ability to make relatively unbiased conclusions. An authority may lack trustworthiness either because of a lack of honesty or because of preformed opinions the source is unwilling to change. In the statement by the former director of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency George Tenet to U.S. president George W. Bush, Tenet told Bush that the prospects of finding weapons of mass destruction in Iraq would be a "slam dunk."¹⁰ Tenet's prediction proved to be false. Some believe Tenet was being dishonest; some believe he was simply unable to get past his previous beliefs about Iraq and weapons of mass destruction.

PRINCIPLE

The argument from principle is a useful technique for supporting an argument of evaluation—especially in cases when debaters must justify a particular action. Whereas the argument by causality judges an action based on its consequences, the argument by principle judges an action based on the principles involved. A simple comparison might clarify the distinction between consequences and principles. Why, for instance, should you not cheat? An argument based on consequences might say you should not cheat because if you are caught, you will be expelled from school. An argument from principle might say you should not cheat because cheating goes against the important principle of honesty. Debaters using argument from principle ordinarily claim that principles are more important than consequences and that when consequences and principles point in opposite directions, people should follow their principles.

An argument from principle ordinarily has three parts. First, a debater must select a principle. Second, the debater should argue for the importance of that principle. Third, the debater should apply the action being contemplated to the principle. One action sometimes justified on principle is the abolition of capital punishment. We can use this example to explain the three parts of an argument by principle.

In the case of capital punishment, the debater might, for instance, select the sanctity of human life as the appropriate principle. Having selected this principle, she then would turn to a consideration of the importance of that principle, perhaps suggesting that we should never violate the sanctity of life because life is the essence of human existence. Without life, she might argue, people lose all features of humanity. Having selected the principle and shown why it is important, she would then apply the action to the principle. She could show how capital punishment quite obviously violates the sanctity of human life because it involves the intentional taking of a human life. The following diagram illustrates this argument by principle: