



CONCLUSION

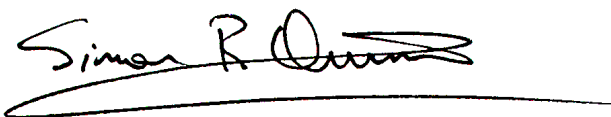
Conclusion

Every debater likes to think that he or she can finish on the key point, and I'm no different. My key point, I think, is simply this: *debating is a game*. Yes, debating teaches valuable skills, and hopefully debating is interesting – but ultimately it is still a game. The aim of a debate, as with the aim of any game, is *to win*. There is no better way to improve your debating, and to have fun doing so, than to enter every debate determined to do whatever possible – within the rules and the spirit of the contest – to win.

Of course, nobody who debates for any length of time keeps winning – sooner or later, adjudicators will award debates against you. This can be difficult to accept, but it is important to remember that most debaters learn most of their vital lessons from the debates they lose, not the ones they win. Sadly, every adjudicator has stories of debaters, coaches or supporters from a losing team who prefer to disagree emphatically with the result rather than to consider the reasons for their loss. This is unfortunate, and not merely because most adjudicators undoubtedly get it right most of the time. Every debate is an opportunity to learn something – particularly the debates you lose. In my experience, those debaters who learn the most over the long haul are those who never rest upon the good days and never whinge about the bad.

This book has been full of detailed explanations – of tips and techniques, rules and other requirements. These things are vital to successful debating, at any age and at every standard. But, ultimately, they are not what debating *is*, and they are certainly not what makes debating *fun*. When I started debating in primary school, I knew little about technique and even less about the rules. But I thought debating was exciting and that debates were fun. And there was just one simple reason for this – *I got to stand up and argue with somebody in public*.

I decided to write this book because I thought that I should write down what I had learned about debating while I still remembered it. This book will have been a success if it helps some debaters, their coaches or their supporters to understand better the rules, the motivations and the strategies for successful debating. If it encourages some young people to take an interest in some important issues of social discussion, that will be better still. But ultimately, I hope this book inspires debaters to enjoy and to keep enjoying debating for what it is: the simple challenge and thrill of standing up and telling someone that they're wrong.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Simon R. Quinn". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a long, horizontal stroke.

Simon R. Quinn
January 2005