

Howard Kahane / Nancy Cavender

The Use of
Reason in
Everyday
Life



Logic and Contemporary Rhetoric

n i n t h e d i t i o n

Kahane / Cavender

Logic and Contemporary Rhetoric ninth e

WADSWORTH

Logic and Contemporary Rhetoric

The Use of Reason in Everyday Life

NINTH EDITION

Howard Kahane

*University of Maryland
Baltimore County*

Nancy Cavender

College of Marin



WADSWORTH
—★—TM
THOMSON LEARNING

Australia • Canada • Mexico • Singapore • Spain
United Kingdom • United States

Philosophy Editor: Peter Adams
Assistant Editor: Kara Kindstrom
Editorial Assistant: Chalida Anusasananan
Marketing Manager: Dave Garrison
Print/Media Buyer: Christopher Burnham
Permissions Editor: Robert Kauser
Production Service: Hal Lockwood, Penmarin

Text Designer: Paula Shubert and Image House
Copy Editor: Laura Larson
Cover Designer: Wadsworth Digital Productions
Cover Image:
Cover Printer: Webcom Limited
Compositor: G & S Typesetters
Printer: Webcom Limited

COPYRIGHT © 2002 Wadsworth Group.
Wadsworth is an imprint of the Wadsworth Group,
a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Thomson
Learning™ is a trademark used herein under
license.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. No part of this work
covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced
or used in any form or by any means—graphic,
electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying,
recording, taping, Web distribution, or information
storage and retrieval systems—without the written
permission of the publisher.

Printed in Canada

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 05 04 03 02

For permission to use material from this text,
contact us by

Web: <http://www.thomsonrights.com>

Fax: 1-800-730-2215

Phone: 1-800-730-2214

For more information, contact
Wadsworth/Thomson Learning
10 Davis Drive
Belmont, CA 94002-3098
USA

For more information about our products,
contact us:
Thomson Learning Academic Resource Center
1-800-423-0563
<http://www.wadsworth.com>

International Headquarters
Thomson Learning
International Division
290 Harbor Drive, 2nd Floor
Stamford, CT 06902-7477
USA

UK/Europe/Middle East/South Africa
Thomson Learning
Berkshire House
168-173 High Holborn
London WC1V 7AA
United Kingdom

Asia
Thomson Learning
60 Albert Complex, #15-01
Singapore 189969

Canada
Nelson Thomson Learning
1120 Birchmount Road
Toronto, Ontario M1K 5G4
Canada

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Kahane, Howard, 1928–

Logic and contemporary rhetoric : the use of reason in everyday life /
Howard Kahane, Nancy Cavender.—9th ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

ISBN 0-534-53578-X

1. Reasoning. 2. Fallacies (Logic) 3. Judgment (Logic) 4. Mass
media. I. Cavender, Nancy. II. Title.

BC177.K34 2001

160—dc21

2001026167

www.wadsworth.com

wadsworth.com is the World Wide Web site for Wadsworth and is your direct source to dozens of online resources.

At *wadsworth.com* you can find out about supplements, demonstration software, and student resources. You can also send email to many of our authors and preview new publications and exciting new technologies.

wadsworth.com

Changing the way the world learns®

For Bonny sweet Robin . . .

I do not pretend to know what many ignorant men are sure of.

—Clarence Darrow

Education is not simply the world of abstract verbalized knowledge.

—Aldous Huxely

To know that we know what we know, and that we do not know what we do not know, that is true knowledge.

—Henry David Thoreau

Many people would sooner die than think. In fact, they do.

—Bertrand Russell

We have met the enemy and he is us.

—Walt Kelly's "Pogo"

You can fool too many of the people too much of the time.

—James Thurber

PREFACE

The purpose of this ninth edition of *Logic and Contemporary Rhetoric*, as of the previous eight, is to help students improve their ability to reason well about problems they encounter in everyday life and about issues that are debated in the social/political arena. (The intent certainly is not to move students to the right or left on the political spectrum but rather to help them move *up* on the scale measuring rational sophistication.)

The text contains examples and exercise items drawn from a broad range of sources—television programs, advertisements, literary works, political speeches, newspaper columns, and so on. Students get to sharpen their ability to think critically by reasoning about important topics and issues—abortion, astrology, capitalism, corruption, drugs, diets, doublespeak—instead of examples concerning sophomores dating seniors or all Greeks being mortal. It quotes from the writings, comments, and testimony of Aristotle, Molefi Kete Asante, Woody Allen, Muhammad Ali, Saint Augustine, Candice Bergen, Joyce Brothers, Ambrose Bierce, Winston Churchill, Ray Charles, Linda Chavez, Sarah, Dutchess of York, William Shakespeare, O. J. Simpson, Adlai Stevenson, Alice Walker, Barbara Walters, Oprah Winfrey, and hundreds of others.

Examples are drawn from astrological predictions, Budweiser commercials, Bush and Clinton political doings, syndicated columnists, canned letters sent by members of Congress in response to constituent queries, works of literature, and hundreds of other sources. Instead of the made-to-order cartoons that appear in some other texts, *Logic and Contemporary Rhetoric* contains drawings by the likes of David Levine, Edward Sorel, Tom Toles, George Booth, Jules Feiffer, and many others, and comic strips featuring *Calvin and Hobbes*, *Andy Capp*, *Doonesbury*, *Beetle Bailey*, *Dennis the Menace*, and others to illustrate points in a lively and interesting manner. The trademark of *Logic and Contemporary Rhetoric* always has been, and still is, ease of comprehension and the presentation of up-to-date and interesting material. Textbooks need not be dull!

NEW TO THE NINTH EDITION

The principal changes in this edition are these:

1. Hundreds of old examples have been replaced by more up-to-date items culled from the (sadly) thousands of new candidates. For example, political items concerning the 2000 presidential campaign and the new Bush administration have replaced many older ones dealing with Clinton and Gore.
2. Hundreds of old exercise items have been replaced by new ones, including some keyed to InfoTrac.
3. Although much of the text again has been rewritten to improve organization, style, and flow, the general subject matter covered by this new edition has not changed. But several substantive changes have been made, including in particular these three:
 - a. The first two chapters in the book have been thoroughly revised. A good deal of the material concerning deduction and induction that appeared in Chapter 1 of the eighth edition has been moved to the new Chapter 2, devoted exclusively to a better account of these two related topics. Chapter 1 now serves as a general introduction to the whole topic of good and bad reasoning, introduces students to the basic ideas of deductive and inductive reasoning, stressing the vital importance of having good background beliefs and worldviews and of not being taken in by some currently popular but wrong ideas on these topics. Chapter 2 delves more deeply into the nature of deduction and induction, now containing material from old Chapter 1 and from the Appendix of the eighth edition. The point of some of these revisions has been to allow instructors at an early point in the semester to cover more easily just the amount of material concerning deduction and induction they deem appropriate for the students in their classes.
 - b. Several new examples have been added from important literary works—for example, writings by Jane Austen and Albert Camus—as a way of nicely illustrating how worldviews influence reasoning in daily life and how psychological blocks interfere with cogent reasoning and decision making, often to the detriment of ourselves and others.
 - c. The text's final chapter, Chapter 12, concerning textbooks as information sources, has been revised so as to take account of the changes in that ever-changing information source.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TEXT

The thought that sparked the original organization of material in *Logic and Contemporary Rhetoric* way back in 1969–1970 was that student reasoning about everyday topics could be improved by acquainting them with a few basic principles of good reasoning and, in particular, by enlightening them concerning common ways in which people are taken in by fallacious arguments and reasoning in everyday life. But a close examination of the ways in which reasoning in fact goes wrong in everyday life shows that it does so in a majority of cases first because of a lack of sufficient (or sufficiently accurate) background information; second, because of the psychological impediments (wishful thinking, rationalization, prejudice, superstition, provincialism, and so on) that stand in

the way of cogent reasoning; and third, because of a poor understanding of the nature and quality of the various information sources.

Taking account of this insight has resulted in a book that divides into eight parts, as follows:

1. *Good and Bad Reasoning*: Chapter 1 introduces students to some basic ideas about good and bad reasoning, the importance of having good background beliefs, in particular of having well-pruned worldviews, as well as some very rudimentary remarks about deduction and induction and the three overarching fallacy categories employed in chapters 3, 4, and 5.
2. *Deduction and Induction*: Chapter 2 contains more detailed material on deductive and inductive validity and invalidity.
3. *Fallacious Reasoning*: Chapters 3, 4, and 5 discuss fallacious reasoning, concentrating on how to avoid fallacies by becoming familiar with the types most frequently encountered in everyday life. The point is to help students increase their ability to spot fallacious reasoning by discussing the most common types of fallacious argument and by providing students with everyday life examples on which to practice.
4. *Impediments to Cogent Reasoning*: Chapter 6 discusses wishful thinking, rationalization, provincialism, denial, and so on, and how to overcome them. It explains the attractiveness and mistaken nature of belief in the paranormal and other pseudosciences. In some ways, this is the most important chapter in the book, because these skewers of rational thought so severely infect the thinking of all of us. (Some instructors pass over this chapter on the grounds that the topic is more appropriately taught in psychology classes, not in classes primarily concerned with critical reasoning. But the reality here is that many students do not take the relevant psychology classes and that those who do often are provided with a purely theoretical account divorced from the students' own reasoning in everyday life, not with a "how-to" discussion designed to help them overcome these obstacles to rational thought.)
5. *Language*: Chapter 7 discusses the ways in which language itself can be used to manipulate meaning, for instance, via doubletalk and long-winded locutions. (This chapter also contains a section, not common in critical-thinking texts, on the linguistic revolution that has tremendously reduced the use of sexist, racist, and other pejorative locutions in everyday discourse; and it also has a few things to say about the use of politically correct (PC) locutions.)
6. *Evaluating and Writing Cogent Essays*: Chapter 8 deals with the evaluation of extended argumentative passages—essays, editorials, political speeches, and so on. Chapter 9 addresses the writing of these kinds of argumentative passages. (Instructors are urged not to pass over Chapter 9 and urged to have students write *at least* two argumentative papers during the semester. Writing is very likely the best way in which we all can learn to sharpen our ability to reason well. Writing is indeed nature's way of letting us know how sloppy our thinking often is. But it also is the best way to learn how to sharpen our ability to think straight.)
7. *Important Sources of Information*: Chapter 10 discusses advertising as an information source (singling out political ads for special scrutiny); Chapter 11, the media (television, newspapers, radio, books, and magazines), in particular, the mass media; and Chapter 12, public school textbooks. (For many people, these

are the most important sources of information about how the world works. Instructors are urged not to pass over the chapter on the media too quickly: In this day and age, so much that happens in our lives depends on our being able to assess accurately what the media—in particular, the mass media—tells us.)

8. *More on Cogent Reasoning:* The Appendix provides additional material on deduction and induction (including a few words about syllogisms); cause and effect; scientific method; and so on.

Note also that a section at the back of the book provides answers to selected exercise items. It should be remembered, however, that most of the exercise items in this text are drawn from everyday life, where shades of gray outnumber blacks and whites. The answers provided thus constitute author responses rather than definitive pronouncements. Similar remarks apply to the answers to the remaining exercise items provided in the *Instructor's Manual* designed to accompany *Logic and Contemporary Rhetoric*.

Finally, note that a Glossary has been added at the back of text, along with the Bibliography and Index.

THE UNIQUE NATURE OF LOGIC AND CONTEMPORARY RHETORIC

This book is unique among critical reasoning texts in bringing together all of these apparently diverse elements, in particular, in stressing the importance of overcoming natural impediments to cogent reasoning; in bringing to bear good background information when dealing with everyday problems; and in so extensively discussing the most important information sources. In this complicated modern world, all of us are laypersons most of the time with respect to most topics; the ability to deal effectively with the “expert” information available to us via the media, textbooks and periodicals—to separate wheat from chaff—thus is crucial to our ability to reason well about everyday problems, whether of a personal or of a social/political nature.

Although the text contains much discussion of theory, this is *not* a treatise on the theory of cogent and fallacious reasoning. Rather, it is designed to help students learn *how* to reason well and *how* to avoid fallacious reasoning. That is why so many examples and exercise items have been included—arranged so as to increase student sophistication as they progress through the book—and why exercises and examples have been drawn primarily from everyday life. Learning how to reason well and how to evaluate the rhetoric of others is a skill that, like most others, requires practice, in this case practice on the genuine article—actual examples drawn from everyday life.

This text provides students with a good deal more than the usual supply of exercise items, but perhaps the most important are those requiring them to do things on their own: find examples from the mass media, write letters to elected officials, do research on specified topics. (The *Instructor's Manual*, available to adopters of the text, suggests several other kinds of student activities—for example, classroom debates on issues of the day—that dovetail nicely with the spirit of the text.)

A true critical reasoning course, or textbook, is unthinkable in a closed or authoritarian society and antithetical to the indoctrination practiced in that kind of culture. The authors of this text take very seriously the admonition that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. Citizens who think for themselves, rather than uncritically ingesting what their

leaders and others with power tell them, are the absolutely necessary ingredient of a society that is to remain free.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks to the publisher's reviewers for this ninth edition: Joseph Campbell, Washington State University; David Detmer, Purdue University, Calumet Campus; John Hernandez, Palo Alto College; Herschel Mack, Humboldt State University; Malcolm Reid, Gordon College.

Thanks also to the others who have aided in the preparation of this and previous editions, including Professors Thomas Allen, California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo; Don Anderson, Pierce College; Anatole Anton, San Francisco State University; Gary L. Baran, Los Angeles City College; Lawrence Beloof, West Hills Community College; William Bonis, California State University, Long Beach; Gene Booth, University of New Mexico; Donald Burrell, California State University, Los Angeles; Henry C. Byerly, University of Arizona; Alice Cleveland, College of Marin; Monte Cook, University of Oklahoma; Rosemary Cook, Saybrook Institute; Wally Cox, Regent University; Leland Creer, Central Connecticut State University; Robert Cogan, Edinboro University; R. V. Dusek, University of New Hampshire; Frank Fair, Sam Houston State University; Dana R. Flint, Lincoln University; Marilyn M. Fry, Coastline Community College; Sidney Gendin, Eastern Michigan University; Norman L. Geisler, Liberty University; James A. Gould, University of South Florida; J. Anthony Greybasch, Central State University; Paul J. Haanstad, University of Utah; Max O. Hallman, Merced College; Alan Hausman, Hunter College; James Heffernan, University of the Pacific; Mark Herron, National University; J. Thomas Howald, Franklin College; John L. King, University of North Carolina; Charles Landesman, Hunter College and CUNY Graduate Center; Donald Lazere, California Polytechnic State University; Patrick Maher, University of Pittsburgh; Reed Markham, California Polytechnic University, Pomona; Judith McBride, somewhere in Arizona; Thomas McKay, Syracuse University; Donna Monahan, College of Marin; David Morgan, University of Northern Iowa; Clayton Morga-
reidge, Lewis and Clark College; Gonzalo T. Palacios, University of the District of Columbia; Ray Perkins, Jr., Plymouth State University; Linda Plackowski, Delta College; Nelson Pole, Cleveland State University; Merrill Proudfoot, Park College; Vincent Riccardi, Orange Coast College; Paul O. Ricci, Cypress College; Paul A. Roth, University of Missouri; Arent H. Schuyler, Jr., University of California, Santa Barbara; Robert Schwartz, University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee; Roger Seanom, University of British Columbia; S. Samuel Shermis, Purdue University; Pamela Spoto, California State University, Chico; Douglas Stalker, University of Delaware; Ben Starr, Modesto Junior College; Joan Straumanis, Kenyon College; John Stroupe, Western Michigan University; Gregory P. Swartzentruber, Villanova University; Roye Templeton, University of Maryland, Baltimore County; John Titchener, University of Maryland, Baltimore County; and Perry Weddle, California State University, Sacramento.

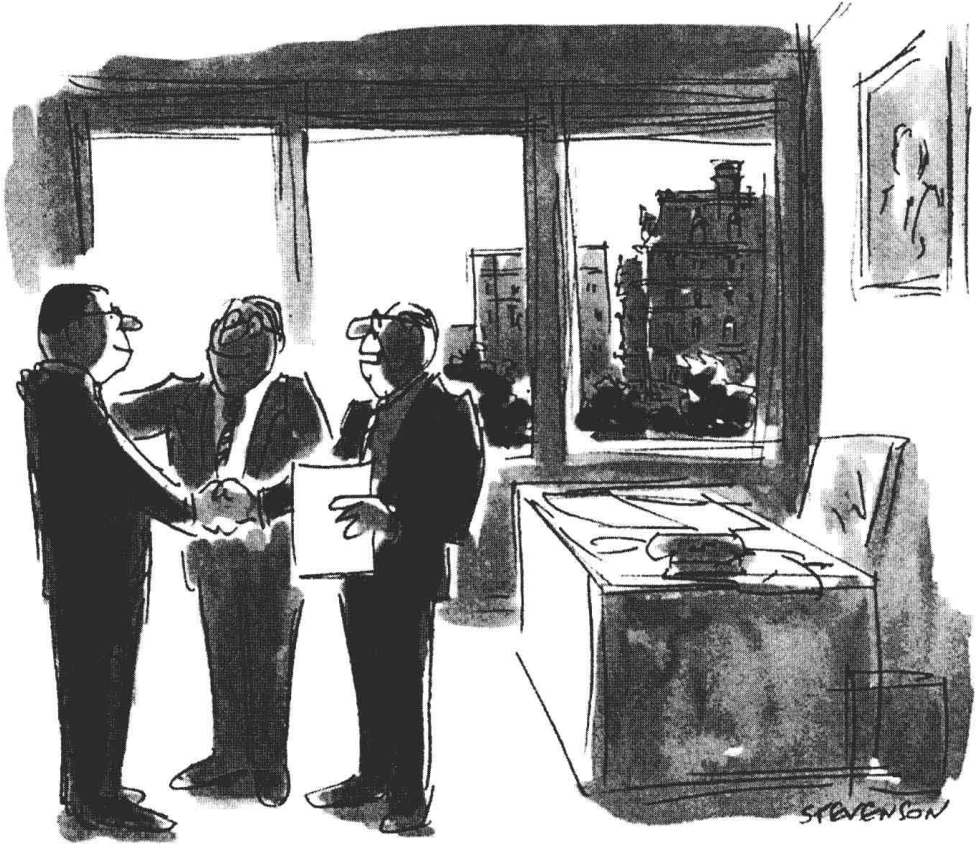
Finally, our very special thanks to the students of Whitman College, the University of Kansas, Bernard Baruch College of CUNY, the University of Maryland Baltimore County, and the College of Marin.

HOWARD KAHANE
San Francisco, California

NANCY CAVENDER
Mill Valley, California

What is the use of philosophy, if all it does is enable you to talk . . . about some abstruse questions of logic, etc., and if it does not improve your thinking about the important questions of everyday life?

—Ludwig Wittgenstein



Drawing by Stevenson; © 1987 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

“Congratulations, Dave! I don’t think I’ve read a more beautifully evasive and subtly misleading public statement in all my years in government.”

Cartoon commentary on the state of contemporary rhetoric.

CONTENTS

Preface xii

CHAPTER 1 GOOD AND BAD REASONING 1

- 1 Reasoning and Arguments 2
- 2 Exposition and Argument 4
- 3 Cogent Reasoning 6
- 4 Two Basic Kinds of Valid Arguments 9
- 5 Some Wrong Ideas about Cogent Reasoning 12
- 6 Background Beliefs 15
- 7 Kinds of Background Beliefs 15
- 8 Worldviews or Philosophies 16
- 9 Insufficiently Grounded Beliefs 18
- 10 Two Vital Kinds of Background Beliefs 22
- 11 Science to the Rescue 23
- Summary of Chapter 1 27

CHAPTER 2 MORE ON DEDUCTION AND INDUCTION 31

- 1 Deductive Validity 31
- 2 Deductive Invalidity 34
- 3 Syllogisms 35
- 4 Indirect Proofs 37
- 5 Tautologies, Contradictions, and
 Contingent Statements 37
- 6 Inductive Validity (Correctness) and
 Invalidity (Incorrectness) 38
- 7 A Misconception about Deduction and Induction 43
- 8 Reasoning Cogently versus Being Right in Fact 43
- Summary of Chapter 2 44

CHAPTER 3	FALLACIOUS REASONING—1	49
1	Appeal to Authority	50
2	Inconsistency	54
3	Straw Man	59
4	False Dilemma and the Either-Or Fallacy	60
5	Begging the Question	61
6	Questionable Premise—Questionable Statement	62
7	Suppressed (Overlooked) Evidence	63
8	Tokenism	65
	Summary of Chapter 3	66
CHAPTER 4	FALLACIOUS REASONING—2	73
1	<i>Ad Hominem</i> Argument	73
2	Two Wrongs Make a Right	75
3	Irrelevant Reason (Non Sequitur)	78
4	Equivocation	79
5	Appeal to Ignorance	82
6	Composition and Division	83
7	Slippery Slope	84
	Summary of Chapter 4	84
CHAPTER 5	FALLACIOUS REASONING—3	91
1	Hasty Conclusion	91
2	Small Sample	92
3	Unrepresentative Sample	92
4	Questionable Cause	93
5	Questionable Analogy	96
6	Questionable Statistics	98
7	Questionable Uses of Good Statistics	100
8	Polls: An Important Special Case	103
9	False Charge of Fallacy	107
	Summary of Chapter 5	109
CHAPTER 6	PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPEDIMENTS TO COGENT REASONING: SHOOTING OURSELVES IN THE FOOT	121
1	Loyalty, Provincialism, and the Herd Instinct	122
2	Prejudice, Stereotypes, Scapegoats, and Partisan Mind Sets	124

3	Superstitious Beliefs	126
4	Wishful Thinking and Self-Deception	127
5	Rationalization and Procrastination	129
6	Other Defense Mechanisms	132
7	The Benefits of Self-Deception, Wishful Thinking, and Denial	133
8	The Pull of Pseudoscience and the Paranormal	135
9	Lack of a Good Sense of Proportion	140
	Summary of Chapter 6	142
CHAPTER 7	LANGUAGE	149
1	Cognitive and Emotive Meanings	149
2	Emotive Meanings and Persuasive Uses of Language	150
3	Other Common Rhetorical Devices	156
4	Those Who Control the Definitions . . .	161
5	The Reform of Sexist Language	165
6	PC (Politically Correct) Terminology	168
	Summary of Chapter 7	170
CHAPTER 8	EVALUATING EXTENDED ARGUMENTS	177
1	The Basic Tasks of Essay Evaluation	178
2	Quick Appraisals	185
3	The Margin Note and Summary Method	188
4	Dealing with Value Claims	193
5	Evaluating Ironic Works	197
	Summary of Chapter 8	202
CHAPTER 9	WRITING COGENT (AND PERSUASIVE) ESSAYS	205
1	The Writing Process	205
2	Preparing to Write	206
3	Writing the Essay	207
4	Supporting Reasons Effectively	211
	Summary of Chapter 9	230
CHAPTER 10	ADVERTISING: SELLING THE PRODUCT	233
1	Promise and Identification Advertisements	234
2	Things to Watch Out for in Advertisements	237

	3	New Marketing Wrinkles	246
	4	Political Advertising	250
		Summary of Chapter 10	264
CHAPTER 11		MANAGING THE NEWS	269
	1	The Media and the Power of Money	270
	2	News-Gathering Methods Are Designed to Save Money	282
	3	Misdirection and Lack of Proportion	284
	4	News Reporting: Theory and Practice	285
	5	Devices Used to Slant the News	292
	6	Television, Film, and Electronic Information Sources	298
	7	The Non-Mass Media to the Rescue	300
	8	Recent Developments	302
		Summary of Chapter 11	307
CHAPTER 12		TEXTBOOKS: MANAGING WORLDVIEWS	315
	1	High School History Textbooks	316
	2	A Typical High School History Textbook	322
	3	Social Studies (Civics) Textbooks Minimize the Great Gulf between Theory and Practice	328
	4	Textbooks and Indoctrination	330
	5	Textbooks and Politics	332
	6	Censorship	336
	7	Textbooks Fail to Give Students Genuine Understanding	344
	8	Postscript on College Texts	346
		Summary of Chapter 12	347
APPENDIX		MORE ON COGENT REASONING	355
	1	More on Cause and Effect	355
	2	Scientific Method	356
	3	Calculating Probabilities and Fair Odds	359
		Answers to Starred Exercise Items	364
		Bibliography	372
		Glossary	378
		Indexes	382

*It's much easier to do and die than it is
to reason why.*

—H. A. Studdert Kennedy

*Read not to contradict and confute, nor
to believe and take for granted . . . but
to weigh and consider.*

—Francis Bacon

*You can lead a man up to the university,
but you can't make him think.*

—Finley Peter Dunne

*You can lead me to college . . . but you
can't make me think.*

—Sweatshirt update seen
at Duke University

*Ignorance of reality provides no
protection from it.*

—Harold Gordon

Chapter

1

GOOD AND BAD REASONING

There is much truth to the old saying that life is just one problem after another. That's why problem solving is one of life's major preoccupations. **Reasoning** is the essential ingredient in problem solving. When confronted with a problem, those of us who are rational reason from what we already know, or have good reason to believe, or can find out, to new beliefs useful in solving that problem. The trick, of course, is to reason well. This book is about good reasoning—about how to reason well in everyday life—whether dealing with personal problems or those of a social or political nature.

Fortunately, no one is an island. We all have available to us a great deal of knowledge others have gained through experience and good reasoning—accurate information and well-intended advice available to anyone who reaches out for it. Unfortunately, not all information is created equal. Charlatans and fools can speak as loudly as saints or Nobel Prize winners. Self-interest often clouds the thinking of even the brightest individuals. The trick when evaluating the mountain of verbiage we all are exposed to is to separate the nourishing wheat from the expendable chaff. One way to become good at doing this is to think a bit about what makes reasoning good (cogent), as opposed to bad (fallacious).