

The background of the slide is a gradient from light purple on the left to bright orange on the right. In the center is a large, stylized sun with a circular face and numerous wavy, flame-like rays extending outwards. The sun's face and rays are drawn with thin, light-colored lines. The background is filled with small, white, star-like specks of varying sizes.

# *Alchemy of Discernment*

*Rhetorical Fallacies  
and how to challenge them*

## *what is a rhetorical fallacy?*

**rhetoric** is the art of using language effectively, most often to **persuade**. the **“rhetorical question,”** for example, is a question asked with a certain amount of **insincerity**, and is **meant to suggest the answer of what it appears, on the surface, to be asking about.**

a **fallacy** is a misplaced belief or unsound statement. a **rhetorical fallacy** is a statement or argument that looks and sounds good, but **lacks substantial logic.** it is a trick of words used to undermine a reasonable argument.



## **PART ONE**

### **common examples of rhetorical fallacy:**

- ad hominem
  - straw man
  - false dilemma
- appeal to emotion
- false cause/post hoc

**ad hominem:**

*attacking a person instead of  
their argument*



zios will often resort to labeling critics of israel and israeli policy as “anti-semitic” to discredit the person without having to address the arguments they’re putting forward.



**Stewart Mills**  
@StewartMills

‘Self defence’ is a ‘lovely’ thing. You can blow up schools & record yourself doing it. Then if you get criticised you can just say critics are antisemitic or self hating. 🧐



**Younis Tirawi | يونس** @ytirawi · Jul 19

Rafah |

Israeli soldier Yedidya Baruchi from the combat engineering corps hours ago blowing up a school

...

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1:56 AM · Jul 20, 2024 · 90 Views

<https://x.com/StewartMills/status/1814464442081652856>

Accessed: 01/08/2024

## **challenge:**

ad hominem attacks focus on discrediting individuals rather than addressing the issues they raise.

always question **why a person's character is being attacked rather than the arguments they're putting forth**, and if you are being subjected to ad hominem in an argument, **rather than defend yourself, insist that the person remain on-topic.**



**straw man:**

misrepresenting a person's  
argument to make it easier  
to attack.

zios will oversimplify Palestinian demands, claiming that they're "all terrorists who just want to destroy israel," rather than addressing their calls for specific rights and statehood.



<https://x.com/SidelockHolmes/status/1791334848956633568>

Accessed: 01/08/2024



## **challenge:**

pay attention to language that exaggerates and oversimplifies people and situations, and ask yourself whether the topic deserves more nuance.

**false dilemma:**


presenting two options as the  
only possibilities.



## *challenge:*

pay attention to language that exaggerates and oversimplifies people and situations, and ask yourself whether the topic deserves **more** nuance.

*western and israeli media outlets often frame the situation in Palestine as a **choice** between supporting democracy (israel) or supporting terrorism (Palestine), ignoring the context of occupation, the history of the region, and the complexities involved in a 76+ year struggle for freedom.*




HAMAS LEADER KILLED   LIVE: OLYMPICS   LIVE: 2024 ELECTION   POLITICS   U.S. NEWS   WORLD   TIPLINE   [WATCH LIVE](#)





ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

## Is Israel's offensive succeeding or failing?

Israel says it has degraded 10 out of 24 Hamas battalions and killed thousands of fighters. But Hamas is still fighting and its top leaders are still alive.



— Israeli soldiers during ground operations at an undisclosed location in the Gaza Strip in an image released Thursday.  
Israeli Army / AFP - Getty Images

Dec. 21, 2023, 7:00 PM GMT  
By **Dan De Luce**

Israel's military offensive in Gaza has inflicted significant damage on [Hamas](#) but it appears a long way from delivering the death blow to the Palestinian militants that Israeli leaders vowed when the assault began 11 weeks ago.

In slow-moving, street-to-street fighting backed up by relentless

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/israels-offensive-hamas-gaza-succeeding-rcna130745>

Accessed: 01/08/2024



## *challenge:*

be wary of 'either/or' statements that ignore the nuances of a situation, and **challenge yourself to find the alternative solutions.** Things are rarely ever this or that.

***appeal to emotion:***

to manipulate an emotional response rather than present a logical argument.



israeli and western propaganda frequently use **emotional stories** of israeli victims, and conjure **memories of the holocaust** and **Jewish historical suffering**, to *justify* israel's military actions, while underreporting or completely ignoring **current**, **historic**, and **ongoing** Palestinian suffering.

## IDF: 82% of soldiers treated for mental health since Oct. 7 are returning to duty

Military's mental health system checks some 3,000 troops, says returning to army prevents development of long-term disorders

By RENEE GHERT-ZAND [FOLLOW](#)  
and TOI STAFF

2 February 2024, 2:42 pm



Israeli soldiers operate in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip in an undated photo released by the military on January 30, 2024. (Israel Defense Forces)

Most soldiers who have been treated by mental health officers since October 7 are returning to their unit, according to the Israel Defense Forces.

Around 3,000 soldiers in compulsory service or the reserves have been checked by the military's mental health system, with 82% returning to battle. Three-quarters of those treated for post-trauma symptoms at a designated center at the IDF's Tzrifin base have returned to duty, following a mutual decision made by the soldier and the mental health professional who worked with them.

These statistics were first reported on Thursday by the Hebrew-language Kan news network and later confirmed to The Times of Israel by the IDF Spokesperson's office.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-82-of-soldiers-treated-for-mental-health-since-oct-7-are-returning-to-duty/>

Accessed: 01/08/2024

## challenge:

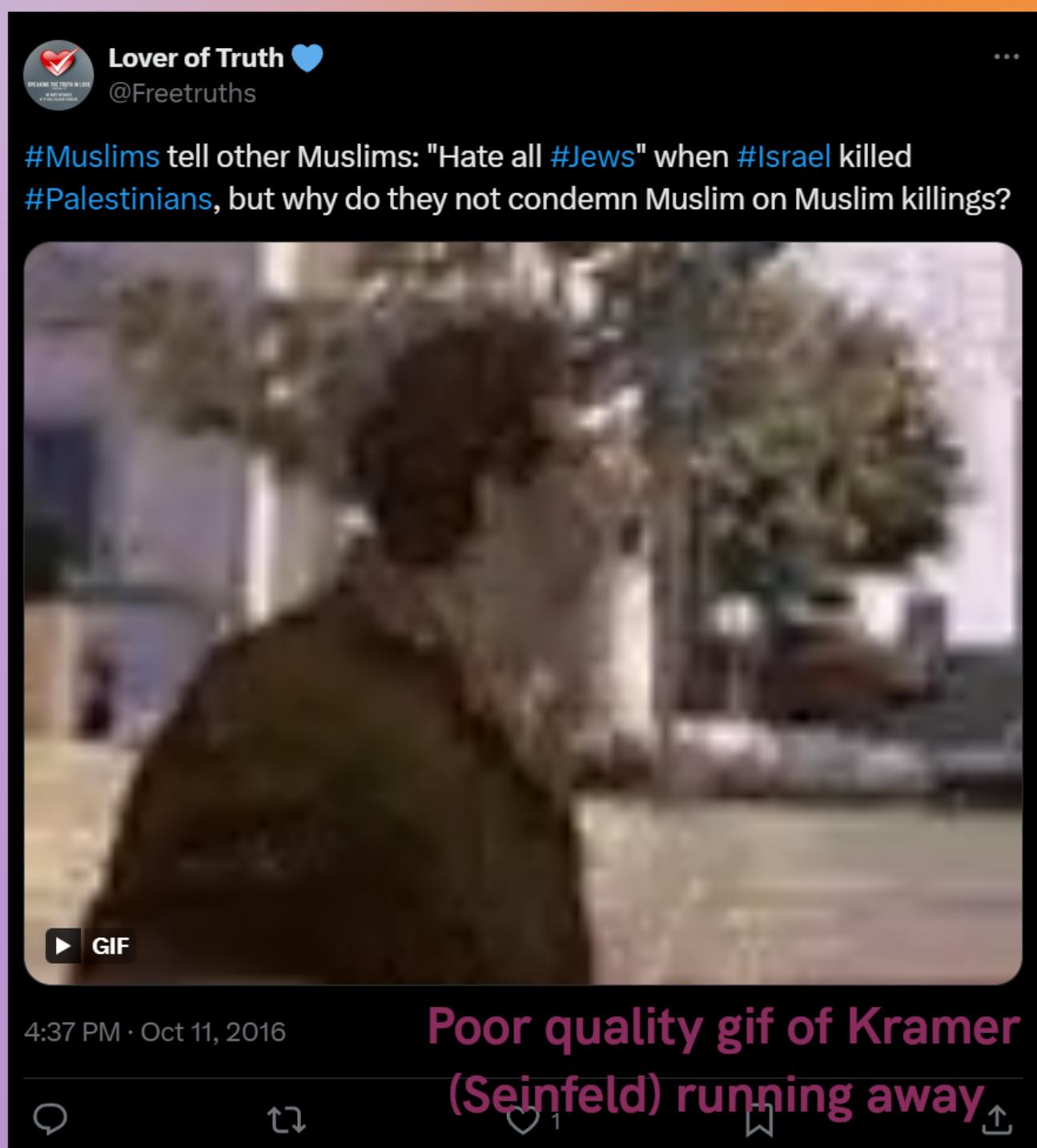
ask yourself if an argument relies more on emotional impact than logical reasoning. a sound argument can have a balance of both but must rely on solid data.



## *false cause/post hoc:*

mislocating the cause of one phenomenon in another that is only seemingly related through the appeal to emotion

zios might argue that a specific attack on israelis is an indicator of violent and rampant Palestinian anti-semitism (i.e. "they attacked us because they hate jews"), without acknowledging the long history of conflict and systemic issues that the attack exists within.



<https://x.com/Freetruths/status/785866924425117696>

Accessed: 01/08/2024



## challenge:

**false cause** assumes causation without sufficient evidence.

investigate if there is a **real connection** between the **events/claims presented**, or whether what is being presented is missing context or a substantial, evident connection.

## *PART TWO*

### common examples of rhetorical fallacy:

- red herring
- hasty generalization
- appeal to authority
  - slippery slope
- circular reasoning



**red herring:**

distracting from the main  
issue by bringing up an  
unrelated topic.

zios will try to divert focus **to internal Palestinian conflicts** or governance issues to **divert attention from israeli policies** and actions in the occupied territories.

an example of this is **weaponizing sexuality** and **gender awareness** in **Palestine** when queer people criticize the israeli government.



*challenge:*

stay focused on the primary argument and **always question the relevance of any diversions.**

***hasty generalizations:***

drawing broad conclusions  
from limited evidence




zionist propaganda might highlight isolated incidents of violence by Palestinians to portray the entire population as violent and hateful, ignoring the broader context of the occupation and the majority peaceful behaviour in Palestine.

World / Middle East

### Hamas-led groups committed ‘numerous war crimes’ on October 7, rights group says

By Kareem Khaddar, Lucas Liechman and Nadine Corrales, CNN  
4 minute read · Updated 10:48 PM EDT, 7th July 2024



Palestinian militants move towards the border fence with Israel from Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip on October 7. Saeed Khattab/AFP/Getty Images

Editor's Note: A version of this story appears in CNN's *Meanwhile in the Middle East* newsletter, a three-times-a-week look inside the region's biggest stories. [Sign up here.](#)

(CNN) — Hamas-led armed groups committed “numerous war crimes and crimes against humanity” against civilians during the October 7 attack in southern Israel, according to a Human Rights Watch (HRW) report released Wednesday.

In a 236-page report titled “I Can’t Erase All the Blood from My Mind”, Palestinian Armed Groups’ October 7 Attack on Israel,” the rights watchdog said that the October 7 attack

<https://edition.cnn.com/2024/07/17/middleeast/hamas-israel-october-7-attack-human-rights-watch-report-mime-intl/index.html>

Accessed: 24/07/2024

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### 'My son was killed on October 6. There was no Hamas'

Family of teen killed in West Bank before Hamas attack says Israel's actions against Palestinians not about Hamas.



Nahla Omairi holds up a picture of her son, 19-year-old Lailah Omairi, who was killed by Israeli settlers in Nablus, Palestine, on October 6, 2023 (Zena Al Tahhan/CNN)

By Zena Al Tahhan  
1 Oct 2023

**Nablus, occupied West Bank** – It has been almost two months since Nahla Omairi's eldest son, 19-year-old Lailah, was shot dead by Israeli settlers.

But for the 43-year-old mother, time has stopped. She keeps her head down and her eyes glued to the ground in sorrow over her killed son.

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Taiwan braces for Typhoon Gaemi, overnight rapids in occupied West Bank

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<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2023/12/1/my-son-was-killed-on-october-6-there-was-no-hamas>

Accessed: 24/07/2024

*challenge:*



be wary of broad statements and **ask for more comprehensive data.**



## **loaded questions:**


asking a question that contains a presumption.

western and israeli propagandists might pose questions like, 'Why do Palestinians always resort to violence?' which presupposes that violence is the default or only action taken by Palestinians, ignoring peaceful resistance and the reasons behind any violence.

 **Hayder Alasadi** 海得    
@1AlasadiHayder

Why Pro-Falastine always violent!? Is it a protest or a riot!? Why they don't have some self control when they "protest"!!!

#HamasTerrorists



1:40 AM · Jan 31, 2024 · 3,756 Views

22 45 110 6

<https://x.com/1AlasadiHayder/status/1752507114722124181>  
Accessed: 01/08/2024



*challenge:*

ask if the question is leading you  
to a **specific conclusion**, or  
suggesting something in its  
construction.

**slippery slope:**

arguing that a minor action will  
lead to severe and inevitable  
consequences.



**zios** might *claim* that granting Palestinians any of their demands will inevitably lead to the “destruction of Israel”, ignoring possibilities for peaceful coexistence.

 **World** Africa Americas Asia Australia China Europe India Middle East United Kingdom

World / Middle East

## Netanyahu again rejects Palestinian sovereignty amid fresh US push for two-state solution

 By Abeer Salman, Mitchell McCluskey, Ibrahim Dahman, [Sophie Tanno](#), [Kevin Liptak](#) and [MJ Lee](#), CNN  
🕒 4 minute read · Updated 4:47 PM EST, Sun January 21, 2024



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu heads the weekly cabinet meeting at the Defence Ministry in Tel Aviv on January 7. Ronen Zvulun/Pool/AFP/Getty Images

**(CNN)** — Israeli Prime Minister [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) on Saturday rejected calls for Palestinian sovereignty following talks with US President Joe Biden about Gaza’s future, suggesting Israel’s security needs would be incompatible with Palestinian statehood.

“I will not compromise on full Israeli security control over all the territory west of Jordan - and this is contrary to a Palestinian state,” Netanyahu said in a post on X

The Israeli leader did not provide any other details in his one-line post in Hebrew. The territory west of Jordan encompasses Israel, the occupied West Bank, and Hamas-run Gaza, where Israel is battling the militant group following the October 7 attacks.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2024/01/21/middleeast/netanyahu-palestinian-sovereignty-two-state-solution-intl/index.html>  
Accessed: 01/08/2024

## *challenge:*

slippery slopes suggest drastic outcomes without proof.

**evaluate each step of the argument to see if the conclusions logically follow.**



**circular reasoning:**

the argument repeats itself rather than providing evidence.

**zios** often resort to the *claim* that 'israel is defending itself because it's under attack,' *without* addressing the **causes** or **context** of the attacks.

If challenged, they will resort to the *claim* that "they are under attack because Palestinians hate Jews."

"Israel does not claim it has been threatened by another state. It has been threatened by an armed group within an occupied territory. It cannot claim the right of self-defence against a threat that emanates from a territory it occupies, from a territory kept under belligerent occupation," Albanese said.

Albanese was referring to a [2004](#) advisory opinion by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which said the construction of Israel's separation wall in the occupied West Bank was illegal. The ICJ rejected the Israeli argument to build the wall, saying it could not invoke the right to self-defence in an occupied territory.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/11/17/does-israel-have-the-right-to-self-defence-in-gaza#>  
Accessed: 01/08/2024



<https://x.com/HenMazzig/status/1816612224326336947>  
Accessed: 01/08/2024



## **challenge:**

circular reasoning restates the argument without new evidence, and is *only* sourced in emotional assumptions.

**identify if the argument goes in a loop and lacks supporting facts.**

**PART THREE**  
**common examples of rhetorical**  
**fallacy:**

- false equivalence
- appeal to tradition
  - cherry picking
- begging the question
- appeal to ignorance



**false equivalence:**

equating two things that are not  
actually equivalent.

**zios** and **zio sympathizers** like to use the “both sides” argument, **comparing and equating** acts of *Palestinian resistance* with *israeli state actions*, implying both are equally violent and unjustified, despite the **significant power imbalance** between the two and the context of Israeli occupation they exist in.



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HAMAS FIGHTERS ENTERED ISRAEL ON OCTOBER 7 KILLING MORE THAN 1,400 PEOPLE

ISRAEL AT WAR

20:19

2:19 / 34:20

"Do You CONDEMN Hamas?" Every Time Piers Morgan Challenged A Guest

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TalkTV's Piers Morgan speaks to Pro-Palestinian guests including comedian Bassem Youssef, podcaster Rahma Zein, and Palestinian Ambassador Husam Zomlot as the situation in the Middle East continues to escalate.

...more

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_mw198U5Rfk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mw198U5Rfk)  
Accessed: 02/08/2024



## *challenge:*

beware of arguments that **emphasize “both sides”** and remain aware of the **differences** in context, scale, and impact between two subjects that are *presented* as “equal”.

**appeal to tradition:**

arguing that something should be done a certain way because “that’s how it’s always been”, or because of a traditional obligation.



for example, **zios** might claim that **israeli control** over certain territories should be maintained because of **traditional biblical claims**, disregarding modern legal and ethical considerations.



**Xio Chardain**

@XChardain



The word "isra'ili" means "someone from the land of the Israelites" and refers to anyone living in or around Israel and Judea either in an ancient or modern context.

4:55 AM · Aug 1, 2024 · **26** Views

<https://x.com/XChardain/status/1818858001769394282>  
Accessed: 02/08/2024

## **challenge:**

question whether the tradition is  
relevant, logical, or justified in the  
current context




**cherry picking:**

selecting only the evidence that supports one's position while ignoring counter-evidence.

**western and israeli media outlets highlight specific acts of violence by Palestinians while ignoring the broader context of occupation and systemic violence against Palestinians.**

for example, emphasizing the October 7 infiltration of israel as the starting point for the current bombardment of Gaza, without recognizing the context of occupation that the infiltration took place in, is a form of *cherry picking*.



Shayan Sardarizadeh

@Shayan86


The Israeli PM's spokesperson to the Arab world falsely claims this video shows Palestinian civilians "fake injuries", using the term "Pollywood".


It's behind-the-scenes footage of a Lebanese short film about Palestinians called "The Reality", as stated by the film's director.

See for yourselves how they fake injuries and evacuating "injured" civilians, all in front of thr cameras.

Pollywood gets busted again.

**• FALSE**





marwanmatar official: Their betrayal was driving us to the point of not wanting all my energy to escape Jerusalem to be broken. In a world of questions do they really see us? They risk our blood is a means to gain fame and money. Or they have already said that never. Dedicated to the disaffected. Kifah

for: User replied

humiliating: Your behind-the-scenes video is being used by select influencers to propagandize that what's happening in Palestine is staged, a form of Pollywood.

for: 17 likes · Reply

Isaiah Berlin: You make me proud WOT

for: 17 likes · Reply


demash...\_Khadi: Free Palestine #WOT

for: 16 likes · Reply

choreographer: AKA

for: 16 likes · Reply


for: 16 likes · Reply



Olga Robinson and David Puente

12:24 PM · Nov 9, 2023 · **1M** Views

<https://x.com/Shayan86/status/1722591021635166630>  
Accessed: 01/08/24



Ofir Gendelman


@ofirgendelman · 1h

The Palestinians are fooling the international media and public opinion. DON'T FALL FOR IT.

See for yourselves how they fake injuries and evacuating "injured" civilians, all in front of thr cameras.

Pollywood gets busted again.

**• FALSE**



166

1.1K

1.8K

61K



**challenge:**

seek out a comprehensive view  
that includes all relevant data,  
not just what supports one side

**begging the question:**

assuming the conclusion within  
the premise of the argument.



the statement, 'israel has the right to defend itself,' for example, *assumes* that **all israeli** actions are defensive, **obscuring the legitimacy and proportionality of those actions.**

***begging the question***; should Palestinian civilians (e.g vulnerable women, children and elderly) be targetted and killed for yet another **military** retaliation?





## *challenge:*

begging the question assumes what it is supposed to prove.

**identify if the argument is circular and lacks independent evidence.**



**appeal to ignorance:**

arguing that a lack of evidence  
proves something.

**zios** *claim*, for example, that there is *no proof* of a Palestinian nation or national identity before the PLO and adoption of the flag in 1964.

however, the lack of signifiers that appeal to a **western** sense of nationalism, **does not** mean that a collective Palestinian nationality with its own signifiers ***never*** existed.

in the same vein, they might state that there is no *proof* of certain **human rights abuses** against Palestinians, *suggesting* that these abuses do not occur, rather than acknowledging that evidence might be suppressed or hard to obtain.

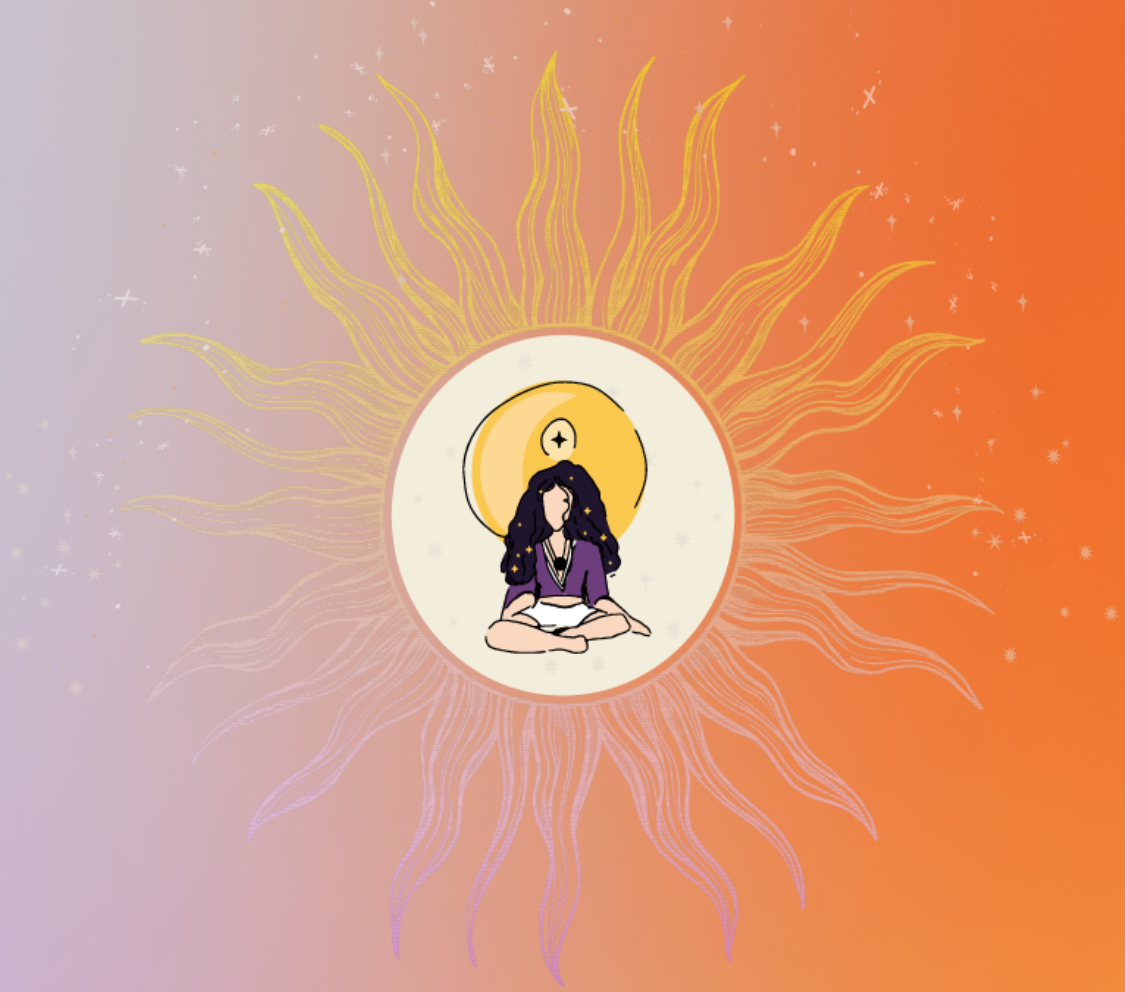


*challenge:*

appeals to ignorance use **the absence of evidence as proof.**

remember (and remind the person you're talking to) that a lack of evidence **does not** necessarily disprove an argument.

not being able to prove god's existence, for example, is **not proof of his nonexistence.**



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