Reasoning

We all like to think we are reasonable. Most of us also think we know what reasonable means. It might be surprising to find out that being reasonable actually means being able to argue well. In fact, *reasoning* is closely related to *arguing*, as you can see form the selected definitions in fig.1. Reasoning and arguing, then, are essential skills for anyone who has a point to prove, has information to get across, and has to move others to act. Presenters need to do that. Lacking these skills is what causes so many presentations to fall dead in the water.

---

reasonable [ˈriːzənəbl]
adj
1. showing <u>reason or sound judgment</u>
2. having the <u>ability to reason</u>
3. having modest or moderate expectations; not making unfair demands
4. (Business / Commerce) moderate in price; not expensive
5. fair; average *reasonable weather*
reasonably *adv*
reasonableness *n*

<u>Collins English Dictionary</u> – Complete and Unabridged 6th Edition 2003. © William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd 1979, 1986 © HarperCollins Publishers 1991, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2003

---

argue [ˈɑːgjuː]
vb **-gues**, **-guing**, **-gued**
1. *(intr)* to quarrel; wrangle *they were always arguing until I arrived*
2. *(intr; often foll by for or against)* to <u>present supporting or opposing reasons</u> or cases in a dispute; reason
3. *(tr; may take a clause as object)* to <u>try to prove by presenting reasons</u>; maintain
4. *(tr; often passive)* to <u>debate or discuss</u> *the case was fully argued before agreement was reached*
5. *(tr)* to <u>persuade</u> *he argued me into going*
6. *(tr)* to <u>give evidence of</u>; suggest *her looks argue despair*
[from Old French *arguer* to assert, charge with, from Latin *arguere* to make clear, accuse; related to Latin *argūtus* clear, *argentum* silver]

arguer *n*

<u>Collins English Dictionary</u> – Complete and Unabridged 6th Edition 2003. © William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd 1979, 1986 © HarperCollins Publishers 1991, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2003

Presenters are not always philosophers, lawyers, journalists, and so perhaps have not had so much opportunity to learn and practise these skills of reasoning and arguing as these professionals. It would be a mistake to think that just because they are used by those professions, they must be hard to learn and use. Indeed, there are only four main categories of reasoning commonly used in presentations and speeches. Each of them adds astounding logic and structure to a speech or presentation. Each of them can act as a foundation when deciding what to say. And they can be combined together to create a more complex route through the material while providing a simple way to memorise or remember, if needed, the presentation.