# Principle of Charity

The principle points that when you are criticizing an opponent’s standing, you should take an effort to understand their side of it and only rebut the best interpretation of the argument. This means, when there is a plausible alternative interpretation to a statement, one should avoid attributing to logical fallacies or untruths or illogicality on their opponent’s arguments (Van Cleave, 2016). As a logician, one should try and re-express their opponent’s position more clearly, records areas of agreement, even mention any lessons learned before rebutting their statement. This means you will be using the steel man argument rather than the straw man argument.

Implementing this principle help advance critical thinking. It forces one to improve their own ability to construct their argument (Davies, 2011). Even though it is important to know how to recognize and counter inconsistencies over-focusing on their mistakes can be counterproductive as it prevents someone from critically looking at the validity of their arguments. Eventually, it helps one learn how to improve and develop their own version of the argument. Advancing this principle also help someone mitigate risks from the backfire effect (Lau & Chan, J., 2017). When faced by evidence that they are wrong, people will in most cases get more evidence to support their stand. presenting your argument in a non-argumentative way that appreciate the opponent’s stance, one can avoid this effect and, in the end, make people listen more to their side of the argument.

An example of this when I was arguing with a friend who quoted President Trump that global warming is a hoax and we should go back to using coal rather than invest in green energy. In my argument, I concurred with him on the fact that green energy was expensive at first but with time I showed him the economic benefits of taking care of the environment. He ended up agreeing with me!

## References

Davies, M. (2011). Concept mapping, mind mapping and argument mapping: what are the differences and do they matter? *Higher Education*, 279-301.

Lau, J., & Chan, J. (2017). *Meaning analysis: Tutorials 1-10.*

Van Cleave, M. (2016). *Introduction to logic and critical thinking.*