

Defective Reasoning: Appeal To Authority

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One of the fallacies in human reasoning is clinching an argument by an appeal to authority, also known as, “Wise Men Can’t Be Wrong.” When we accept an appeal to authority claim, we accept a statement on blind faith just because someone we admire said it.

Using the authority or status of a person to support an argument is one of the main features of the advertising industry, where the appeal of the products they promote depends on the influential power of the person who is advocating it. This could be an actor, a sports figure, an entertainer, or even a government official.

Can we really rely on the leaders and experts of this world to tell us the truth? Have you ever had the hesitant feeling that “the experts” are not expert?

After all, what is an expert anyway? Or should I say, an “ex-spurt”, which is “a has-been a drip under pressure.”

Christopher Cerf and Victor Navasky expose various foolish forecasts in their book, *The Experts Speak: The Definitive Compendium of Authoritative Misinformation*. They collected hundreds of dumb predictions by newspapers, critics, and business executives. Here are a few examples:

» Regarding electric light: “... good enough for our transatlantic friends... but unworthy of the attention of practical or scientific men.” British Parliament report on Thomas Edison’s work, 1878.

» Regarding the telephone: “That’s an amazing invention, but who would ever want to use one of them?” President Rutherford Hayes, 1876.

» Regarding television: “People will soon get tired of staring at a plywood box every night.” Darryl F. Zanuck, head of Twentieth Century-Fox, circa 1946.

» Regarding computers: “There is no reason for any individual to have a computer in their home.” Ken Olson, president of Digital Equipment Corporation (aka, DEC), 1977.

» Regarding aviation: “The popular mind often pictures gigantic flying machines speeding across the Atlantic and carrying innumerable passengers ... It seems safe to say that such ideas are wholly visionary.” Harvard astronomer William Henry Pickering, 1908.

There are several ways “appeal to authority” is misused. We can cite only authorities, steering conveniently away from other testable and concrete evidence, as if expert opinion is always correct. Or we can cite irrelevant authorities, poor authorities, or false authorities.

Almost everything officials told us about the plandemic was a lie! When historians and medical experts look back on the coronavirus plandemic of 2020-2021, they will see that almost everything the government told us about the virus and vaccine was negligent at best, or a lie at worst.

The evidence from 30 countries and the 50 states in the U.S. shows conclusively that lockdowns do not work to stop the spread of the virus. There is no correlation between high, medium, or low lockdown policies and COVID-19 caseloads and fatalities.

The leading U.S. health expert, who I will call Dr. Fallacy, has been the source of some of the most damaging misinformation about COVID-19.

Many in government have been loose with the facts and are prone to changing their minds. Remember the 6-foot social distancing rule? New evidence shows that a 3-foot rule works fine and there is no added benefit from 6-feet. Chalk it up to another convenient fib from habitual fibbers, who have deceived us on everything from masks to herd immunity.

Even if you decide these are not lies but lapses of judgment, they had and are having potentially lethal consequences. When the coronavirus was decimating New York, they told us masks were useless. Three months later, they did a backflip: “Masks work ...”

The government health “expert” later admitted he lied about the reason for telling people they did not need to wear masks. Now, they insist that everyone continue to wear masks even though the evidence shows that those who have recovered from the coronavirus do not need them.

If they lied about masks, what else would they lie about? Turns out they lied about herd immunity, too. Dr. Fallacy admitted that he had “slowly but deliberately been moving the goal posts” on the percentage of the population that needed to be vaccinated before herd immunity against -COVID-19 was reached.

The latest evidence that government policy was one long lie shows that states that had the least restrictive lockdown policies had the lowest unemployment rates while states with highly restrictive lockdown policies had the highest unemployment rates. At the same time, states with harsh lockdown or mild lockdown policies had approximately the same caseloads and fatalities per capita. In other words, strict lockdowns do not stop the disease, but they do destroy the economy where they are applied.

The plandemic was and is a disaster and a tragedy. But the public policy response made it far worse. The virus may fade, but the economic damage will be with us for decades.

And now the health experts are lying about the COVID-19 vaccine, which has not been proven to be safe. It is an experimental treatment which has already shown to have serious side-effects and may damage your own immune system.

The press and media know all this, but do not care, because this was not about the truth. This was about an ideology. Their ideology could not allow them to ever report the truth fairly. And that is exactly what happened. The

truth was ‘masked’—it is that simple. When it came to COVID-19, hiding the truth was the only mask that worked. So, we are still bearing under the mask mandates and the uselessness that they are.

The apostle Paul warns us not to trust in men of the world because in the long run their wisdom is useless:

I Corinthians 3:18-20 Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness"; and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the [worldly] wise, that they are futile."

Like many of the other fallacies in human reasoning, “appeal to authority” can be tough to see, because it is normally a good responsible move to cite relevant authorities supporting your claim. But if all you have are authorities, and everyone is expected to take their word for it without any other evidence to show that those authorities are correct, well then, you have a problem.

Often this fallacy refers to irrelevant authorities, like citing a foot doctor when trying to prove something about mental illness. His or her expertise is in an irrelevant field. When citing authorities to make our case, we should cite relevant authorities, but we also should represent them correctly, and make sure their authority is legitimate.

Now consider this illogical leap: “Four out of five dentists agree that brushing your teeth makes your life meaningful.”

Dentists generally have expert knowledge about dental hygiene, but they are not qualified to draw far-reaching conclusions about its meaningfulness. This is a fallacy of misused authority, as well as irrelevant authority.

For these reasons, it is a good general rule to treat authorities as helpful guides with suggestive evidence. But even authorities deserve a fair share of skepticism since they can make mistakes, overstep their expertise, and otherwise mislead you.

Something may seem true, but who is this “they” who says so? We do not know, and we cannot evaluate the claim. This is a fallacy of anonymous authority. It is particularly *bad* because it is so vague and unwise.

Job 15:2-3 Should a wise man answer with empty knowledge, and fill himself with the east wind? Should he reason with unprofitable talk, or by speeches with which he can do no good?

Job 15:31 Let him not trust in futile things, deceiving himself, for futility will be his reward.

Often, deceivers are under delusion themselves. Those who advocate lies are usually as deceived, as much or more than those who are their targets. If they are sincere in their false belief, they are under a delusion, or if they are insincere, they are equally deluded in presuming that they can make the lie pass for truth before God.

II Timothy 3:13-15 But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

The faithful in Jesus Christ and every word of God have the wisdom from above abiding within to help us resist deception!