

# Talking to Someone Who Lacks Facts and Context but Is Strong on Ideological Opinions

By Phyllis Chesler

I admit that I and so many cherished companions are long past our prime—even though, in my case and, for that matter, in the case of most of my allies, we are all still going strong. I can't help it. I don't know what drives everyone else.

I welcome the younger generations, who have passionately taken up their posts but, despite some laudable exceptions, most newbies do not seem to stand on our shoulders or even know that there *are* shoulders to stand upon. Many are busy reinventing the wheel. Is it because they do not know any history, reject all authority, or simply want to be seen as the original inventors of whatever they are writing about? This is how it's always been... What saddens and annoys me is when newbies begin love bombing me daily, sometimes twice a day with their articles and, after only a month, they immediately monetize their words.

This is far too mercenary, far too corporate for the likes of me. Sadly, I no longer have enough cash to pay for every damn thing that I want to read or watch and about which I sometimes write. Between the twenty streaming platforms and the twenty-five paid online sites, magazines, newspapers, and journals, I'm maxed out. A kind friend bought the *Times of London* for a year. Another very kind friend subscribed me to the online version of the (dreadful) *New York Times*. (I read the *Obits* rather religiously). Otherwise, I'm on my own. One excellent magazine and another excellent streaming service (I dare not

name them lest everyone else immediately pile on) have given me complimentary access. Thank you One and All. I actually gave up my subscriptions to two opera journals. If you know me at all, you'll understand what a sacrifice that was.

Now, here's what's on my mind today.

I began my Zionist journey a long time ago, as early as 1948, when Israel again became a sovereign nation. At the time, I was eight years old. I "got" its liberatory nature all on my own. My family never discussed politics or Israel or, for that matter, anything about their own tormented Old Country or impoverished lives. Anything that important was never mentioned.

Like others, I lost or gave up many feminist friends and colleagues over the years—and definitely many more after 10/7. Over the years, I've remained in touch with a feminist, a very principled and honorable woman whom I've never met in person. At some point, she needed to "convert" me to her point of view about genocidal Israel. In her view, I was too "brilliant" to have been so taken in by the Dark Side. I hung in for a bit but then cut my losses and stopped writing. A few months went by, and yesterday, she suddenly wrote again.

Since I and many of my readers are genuinely interested in how to have a civilized exchange with someone who is less educated than yourself on the matter at hand, if not totally brainwashed, I'm sharing with you one of many such exchanges. Anything else I could possibly have said? If so, tell me.



Evelyn de Morgan - Blindness and Cupidity Chasing Joy from the City 1897

6/21/2026 at 12:57 am

Dearest Phyllis,

I am trying again!

*The rest of the exchange is [here following the link](#). It concludes (Editor)*

Dear X:

I was not the one who broke our silence. You did. You seem to want to convert me to your view. I have no desire and no need to convert you to my fact-based views. But when I do send you articles—fact-based, thoughtful, creative (like the one on the definition and history of tribal and indigenous people for which Jews/Israel truly qualifies), you don't respond as if you've bothered reading it. You instead defend what you view

as the bona fides of your appointed defender-of-your-faith.

Just because someone is Jewish or is married to a Jewish woman or is the grandson of Holocaust survivors does not give them any particular creds to pronounce on the matters at hand.

As to the point being made about Arendt—I thought it was an interesting, even an illuminating point. Of course, I've also read other books about Arendt and evil—she was indeed very smart, I met her once, her husband was one of my professors at college...which is neither here nor there.

Why do you need us to agree on all matters concerning Israel, the Jews, Gaza, Palestine, Islam and the Middle East? It is YOUR steadfast belief that you—and you alone—are in the Right. I understand that the Jews and Israel stand alone at this moment in history. I am not about to join the braying mob scapegoating us and calling for our blood.

Love for our shared feminism of yore,  
Phyllis

*First published in [Phyllis' Newsletter](#)*