

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/how-to-argue-with-steve-jobs>

Ed Catmull, president and co-founder of Pixar Animation Studios, describes how he would demonstrate patience and persistence when he and the late Steve Jobs did not agree on something. Jobs co-founded Pixar and was its CEO at the time.



## Transcript

Yes, so as we started with Steve, Steve had a reputation.. Which everybody knows, it's part of the public record, people talk a lot about it.. And I want to later address some of that.. But I did ask Steve to begin with, I said, so what happens or how do you work if somebody doesn't agree with you.. And he said, well I just explain it to them until they understand.. So I go back to my colleagues and explain this and they all have this nervous laugh.. Now the thing you should understand is, in all the 26 years with Steve, Steve and I never had one of these loud verbal arguments and it's not my nature to do that.. So I never actually had an argument with Steve, but we did disagree fairly frequently about things.. And the way it worked was, I discovered, it was that I would say something to him and he would immediately shoot it down because he could think faster than I could.. So it would end the conversation and I would then wait a week, and usually this was on the telephone..

I'd call him up and I give my counter argument to what he had said and he'd immediately shoot it down.. So I had to wait another week, and sometimes this went on for months.. But in the end one of three things happened.. About a third of the time he said, oh, I get it, you're right and that was the end of it.. And it was another third of the time in which you'd say, actually I think he is right.. The other third of the time where we didn't reach consensus, he just let me do it my way, never said anything more about it...