I think that argument and debate about the issues is all well and good and that we can all learn from hearing the points of view of others. However, it is one thing to argue about and attack the ideas of others, and another to attack the people making the arguments. Arguments attacking the person rather than the idea are known as "ad hominem" arguments. These are, if you remember logic 101, inherently fallacious since they do not address the idea but the person.

I would learn more and feel less irritation with our discussions if people would remember this and treat each other with the respect and civility with which they expect to be treated.

According to Wikipedia…An **ad hominem** argument, also known as **argumentum ad hominem** (Latin: "argument to the person", "argument against the man") consists of replying to an argument by attacking or appealing to the person making the argument, rather than by addressing the substance of the argument. It is most commonly used to refer specifically to the *ad hominem abusive*, or *argumentum ad personam*, which consists of criticizing or personally attacking an argument's proponent in an attempt to discredit that argument.

Other common subtypes of the *ad hominem* include the *ad hominem circumstantial*, or *ad hominem circumstantiae*, an attack which is directed at the circumstances or situation of the arguer; and the *ad hominem tu quoque*, which objects to an argument by characterizing the arguer as being guilty of the same thing that he is arguing against.

For more on this see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ad_hominem