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apophasis

noun apoph·a·sis \ ə-ˈpā-fə-səs \

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Definition of apophysis

1 : the raising of an issue by claiming not to mention it (as in "we won't discuss his past crimes")

- ... he indulges himself in apophysis about his ex-wives ("No, I am most definitely not making any charges or accusations. It's merely that ...").
- —John Brooks

2 : the practice of describing something (such as God) by stating which characteristics it does not have especially because human thought or language is believed to be insufficient to describe it fully or accurately

- ... apophysis happens because, like Moses and the burning bush, persons have been drawn so close to the mystery that they have begun to realize how beautifully, appallingly, heart-breakingly mysterious God really is.
- —Mark Allen McIntosh



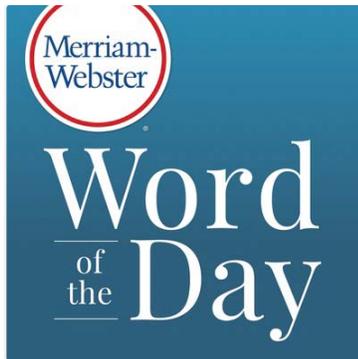
***apophysis* was our Word of the Day on 08/09/2014. Hear the podcast!**

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apophysis

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The Sneaky Roots of *apophysis*

Apophysis is a sly debater's trick, a way of sneaking an issue into the discussion while maintaining plausible deniability. It should come as no surprise, then, that the roots of *apophysis* lie in the concept of denial—the word was adopted into English from Late Latin, where it means "repudiation," and derives from the Greek *apophanai*, meaning "to deny." (*Apophanai*, in turn, comes from *apo-*, meaning "away from" or "off," and *phanai*, meaning "to say.") This particular rhetorical stunt is also known by the labels *preterition* and *paraleipsis* (which is a Greek word for "omission"), but those words are rarer than *apophysis*. Incidentally, don't confuse *apophysis* with *apophysis*; the latter is a scientific word for an expanded or projecting part of an organism.

Origin and Etymology of *apophysis*

Late Latin, repudiation, from Greek, denial, negation, from *apophanai* to deny, from *apo-* + *phanai* to say —
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in the meaning defined [above](#)

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