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The Greatest Speech You'll Ever Live to Regret

WHEN WE EMPLOY the words that most naturally come to our lips, we run the risk of giving the greatest speech we'll ever live to regret. We wind up saying things we can never take back. This happens most often when we allow others to set the tone in confrontations.

We all deal with people “under the influence” nearly everyday. If it's not alcohol or drugs, it's frustration, fear, impatience, lack of self-worth, defensiveness, and a host of other influences. Doesn't it make sense that we should develop a state of mind that will allow us to skillfully interact with these people—whether they be criminals, customers, spouses, kids, or salesclerks—and not let them get our goats?

Nowhere in my long, formal education, did anyone train me in this. I was trained to confront people, to snap back at them to preserve my so-called identity. I had the macho notion that I wouldn't take any crap, any verbal abuse. Several years later I realized that being given abuse was something that would happen the rest of my life, so I'd better learn to handle it.