



How to Defend Yourself With Words

Defending yourself with words is a very useful skill. The ability to defend oneself with words is very often what defines success both personally and professionally. Here we'll explore how to develop this skill.

Steps

1 Silence is golden. When in an argument or debate, whoever is the most belligerent will look quite foolish. Don't let this be you; if someone is getting very loud, talking over you, screaming, seething or what have you, simply stay quiet and wait your turn. Most people will, during the course of speaking, come to natural stopping points. These stopping points are usually rhetorical questions, clincher statements, heavy pauses or segues.

2 Don't look smug. In fact, try not to express any emotions, as this will let them know too much about your internal state, leaving you vulnerable. Smugness, however, is your worst enemy. Seeming smug is very infuriating to others and will make you look like an asshole, weakening your defense in most any situation. A smug demeanor is the number one trait of someone that people would call, "a tool", or, "a douche".

3 Look for logic. Analyze the other persons' argument/tirade/remark. Did they just say something that you can flip around to embarrass them? Did they say something you can easily disprove with close at hand facts? Undermining their logic or turning it on them will make them look profoundly foolish, giving you the win. A classic example of this is found in the film "Happy Gilmore": "Shooter McGavin: You're in big trouble though, pal. I eat pieces of shit like you for breakfast! Happy Gilmore: [laughing] You eat pieces of shit for breakfast? Shooter McGavin: [long pause] No!" and an example of disproving: "Happy Gilmore: That's right, I'm gonna beat your ass on the course! Shooter McGavin: Yeah, right. And Grizzly Adams had a beard. Lee Trevino: Grizzly Adams *did* have a beard."

4 Defend by offending. Insulting a person is perhaps the greatest power you can have over them, they'll have a lingering hurt. Think about how you feel when people insult you, yes you can make them feel that! Watch plenty of stand-up comedians, particularly videos where they're being heckled. Usually, the comic will have a little insult prepackaged, ready to hand out to a heckler, making the comedian seem like a wise guy, and a winner. Also, a nice, smart Alec insult can shut down an exchange very quickly, which brings us to the next step...

5 Know when to walk away. Even if you've thoroughly trounced the other person with a cutting remark, you'll lose the exchange if you stick around for them to fire back. Fire torpedoes, then walk away. You'll look like a boss in front of anyone present and deny your opponent the satisfaction of revenge. Plus, walking away can help keep things verbal and avoid a fistfight.

6 Master gesticulation. The right gestures are unspeakably crucial in any verbal exchange. If you walk up on an exchange between two people, even before you can hear them, you can immediately tell who has the upper hand by their gestures and postures. To project strength, superiority, invulnerability and poise, stand up straight, lean up against something, cross your arms, and raise an eyebrow. Then, only uncross the arms to gesture with your hands to emphasize jokes, wise cracks or points of logic. To project honesty and concern, lean forward slightly, bring your open hands out, and elbows in, this is often referred to as throwing your hands up. NEVER PACE! Standing still makes you look calm, cool and collected. Pacing makes you look desperate and Inelegant.

7 Probe for weakness. The more you know the person, the better. Search for those little insecurities your opponent has, and exploit them. Call big people "stretch", call bald people "Mr. Clean" or "cue ball". Punctuating your sentences with these will be off putting to the other person, and their anger will make them look foolish. If you have a hard time coming up with something, use the dependable all purpose belittling titles: Chief, Pal, or Tough Guy.

- 8 Manipulate perception.** Make sure that no matter how the conversation goes, you always come out as the correct one. Twist their words, your previous words, and the stream of logic to always prove yourself right.

Tips

- Study Zack Morris. Study his pal, A.C. Slater as well. They're always cracking wise and deflating people. Zack Morris is an all around champ at defending himself with words. The wise cracking, smart aleck comedian persona will quickly give most anyone the upper hand in a war of words. Don't become Mr. Belding or Screech, they always lose.

Warnings

- When you walk away, make sure to be very fast. If you end up walking slowly down a long hallway, your opponent could easily fire back, leaving you looking like a loser whether you respond or not.