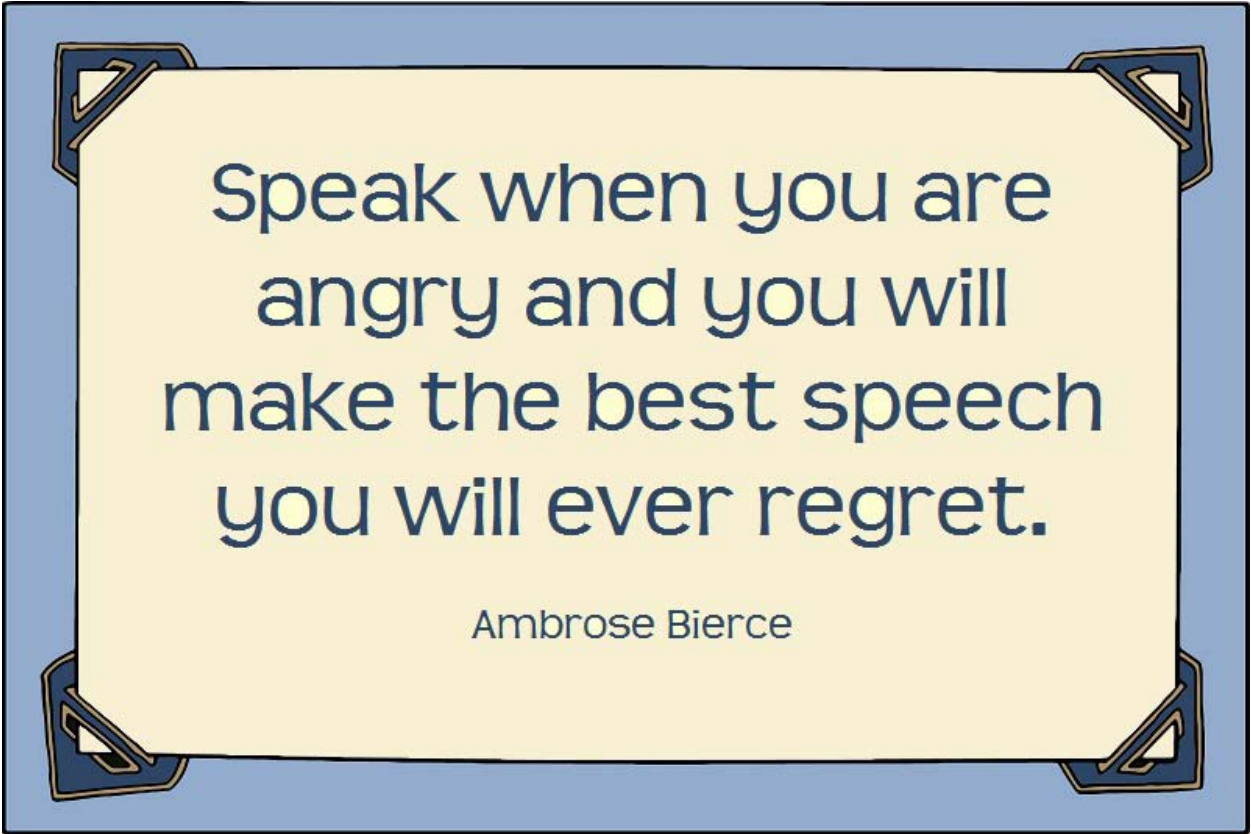


The Fence. A Parable about Anger

[Presented by Philip G. Schmitz](#)



Speak when you are
angry and you will
make the best speech
you will ever regret.

Ambrose Bierce

There once was a little boy with a bad temper. His father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, he should hammer a nail in the back fence rather than take it out on other people.

On the first day, the boy drove 37 nails into the fence. As the days went by, though, the number of nails gradually dwindled down. He discovered it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence.

Finally the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all. He told his father about it, and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail

for each day that he was able to hold his temper. The days passed, and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone. The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence.

He said, "You have done well, my son, and I'm very proud of you. But look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same. Remember that when you say things in anger, your words leave a scar just like this one. You can put a knife in a man and draw it out, and it won't matter how many times you say 'I'm sorry'—the wound is still there. A verbal wound is as bad as a physical one."

I discovered this parable at [Living Life Fully](#) and would like to express my thanks to Tom Walsh, the owner of the site.



Still too young to hammer nails into fences,
he might be a candidate in a few years.

The story is widely available on the Web. Feel free to use my graphics, but please include a link to my [author page](#).