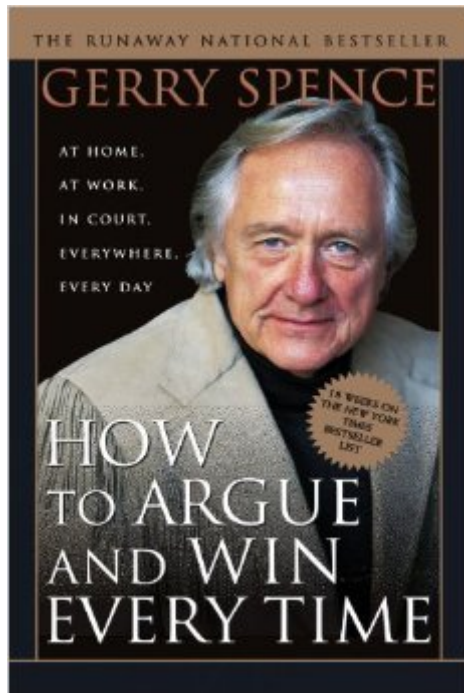


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# How To Argue & Win Every Time: At Home, At Work, In Court, Everywhere, Everyday



## Synopsis

The Laws of Arguing According to Gerry Spence<sup>1</sup>. Everyone is capable of making the winning argument.<sup>2</sup> Winning is getting what we want, which also means helping "others" get what they want.<sup>3</sup> Learn that words are a weapon, and can be used hostilely in combat.<sup>4</sup> Know that there is always a "biological advantage" of delivering the TRUTH.<sup>5</sup> Assault is not argument.<sup>6</sup> Use fear as an ally in public speaking or in argument. Learn to convert its energy.<sup>7</sup> Let emotions show and don't discourage passion.<sup>8</sup> Don't be blinded by brilliance.<sup>9</sup> Learn to speak with the body. The body sometimes speaks more powerfully than words.<sup>10</sup> Know that the enemy is not the person with whom we are engaged in a failing argument, but the vision within ourselves.

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## Customer Reviews

Wow! A lot of folks who have reviewed this book need a hug and a valium (a potent combination I might add). Let me start by saying that the title of this book is a bit misleading, and intentionally so. This book isn't about arguing as much as it's about communicating. Mr. Spence uses the word 'argument' in the context that everything we articulate- whether it's a desire to teach, punish, express wants or state an opinion- is essentially an argument. The twist to this little tome is that effective arguing is not an act of selfishness but a labor of love. A good argument is one in which the greatest good is served. I particularly found the chapter on arguing with kids quite useful. I tend to be quite authoritarian and rule oriented when it comes to child rearing and this little chapter taught me that kids will grow into responsible loving adults without being constantly hovered over and corraled

into so called 'correct behavior'. This chapter is worth the price of the book alone. I recommend this book to anyone who has ever asked for anything in his/her life. Well hell! I must be recommending this book to everyone.

I don't usually review books that have already been reviewed by more than 20 others, but I need to make an exception for 2 reasons. First, this book is **MUST** reading for anyone on my negotiating team. While I'm not a Gerry Spence fan, his negotiating style is simple, but very powerful. Second, for the benefit of all potential readers, I need to respond to the anonymous MBA from Austin Texas who reviewed this book and said "Bottom line is that I didn't feel any more prepared for negotiating after I read it". I guarantee that anyone with negotiating responsibilities who does not get something out of this book is not a very good negotiator. Even if you don't want to mimic Gerry's style, at some point in your business career, you're bound to run into someone who negotiates the way Gerry Spence does. If you don't at least understand what's going on, and how to respond in kind, you're doomed to lose that negotiation. If, after reading this book, you feel like you didn't get anything out of it, either reread it or choose another profession.

From the title you might be expecting a book that would teach you how to argue. You won't find it here. You will find some sound advice on how to approach an argument, such as that you will have more success in your argument if you are respectful to the person you are arguing with, and if you try to make the argument from a position where you can find common ground. You will also find some wisdom on arguing in certain situations, for example arguing with at home or with children. I think the most valuable part of the book is his emphasis of arguing from an emotional perspective. Many people, especially certain groups like men and conservatives, tend to be dismissive of emotional arguments in favor of logical ones. However, Spence shows that emotional arguments are more likely to win than logical ones. The skill of framing a logical argument in an emotional context could be a valuable one. An important omission in the book is arguing in public. Spence tries to address that, but I have the feeling that Spence has lost the ability to identify with people who have trouble speaking in public and the scanty advice he gives seems ineffective - amounting to "just get over it and do it." Another drawback of the book is that it contains a fair amount of polemic. So if you're going to find it annoying that Gerry Spence likes to go on tirades about environmentalism and his dislike of bankers you might want to find a different book. I found it distracting from the real purpose of the book.

Books with grandiose titles like this usually keep me from reading them (Hello publisher's marketing department!). A friend of mine recommended that I read this book, and I was glad that I did. yes, many of Spence's political views (along with my own) are left of center. But it's the PROCESS that this book is all about. I re-read this book a number of times. This book has helped me to become a better therapist (in fact, this is a book that I recommend in my workshops on using metaphor in psychotherapy). If you are a Jungian or otherwise interested in stories and narratives, this book is a good read. We are all, in Spence's words, people of the story. All humans love stories, so it only makes sense to incorporate stories into our arguments and discussions (and therapy sessions and legal debates and....) As I've said, I have re-read this book many times. I particularly enjoy the section on "the power of story" (chp 8?), the section on intuitive speaking and the importance of preparation, and the section on speaking and using your voice.

I never have been a fan of defense attorneys. I dislike the long-haired, showy trademark look of some defense attorneys. I am not fond of "tree-huggers" who take up my time with their passion for causes that don't directly affect me in my daily trials and tribulations. Then, I read this book, introduced as a "critical, must-read" by a winning lawyer when I attended a Special Needs Education Law seminar put on by Pete Wright. Mr. Spence writes eloquently. He presents his thoughts so colorfully the reader doesn't even realize he or she is learning until thinking about it afterward. I crammed the book over a weekend in preparation for an official meeting Monday morning where I expected I'd have to negotiate and argue. I used a key lesson from Gerry and I didn't have to argue, although I was prepared. I will be re-reading this book, probably several times, because it is so entertaining and instructional. And, I'm going to name that huge old Magnolia tree growing outside of my house. She is beautiful.

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