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Words matter

by BRIAN LOCKHART

Imagine going in for a consultation with your doctor, dentist, lawyer, accountant, realtor, or even a government agency.

You sit down in front of a desk, and the person says, ?How the ?EXPLETIVE' are ya? Doin' pretty ?EXPLETIVE' good myself. I looked at your ?EXPLETIVE' report, and it looks pretty ?EXPLETIVE' good.?

You would probably leave that office thinking you may have to find a different person to do your taxes or advise you on your vitamin B12 deficiency, because their level of professionalism just isn't up to what it should be.

Whether you like it or not, and whether you agree with it or not, people will judge you by the way you speak and come to all sorts of conclusions by the words you choose.

There is no doubt that a public way of speaking has changed over the past couple of decades, but for the most part, there are still unwritten rules about the proper place and time for using vulgarity.

I had a conversation recently with a girl I'm very friendly with and she keeps me informed of what's going on in the teenage world, and which music she thinks I should be listening to. She told me she was very nervous about an upcoming dinner she was supposed to attend with her new boyfriend's parents and family.

She described them as ?very Catholic and very conservative ? a totally different dynamic than my family.?

The only advice I could give her was, ?just be yourself, don't take the Lord's name in vain, and don't swear.?

I think that's only common sense. She agreed, and said, ?well, yeah, I'm not an idiot.?

In other words, there's an appropriate place for some language.

The late William F. Buckley, was an author, intellectual, TV host, and founder of the National Review magazine. He was noted for his pattern of speech, which was sort of a cross between Mid Atlantic and Thurston Howell III, Harvard class of 1945. He was also known for his rather extensive vocabulary which he used at every opportunity. Oddly enough, his first and second languages were French and Spanish.

Buckley's image on camera was that of a very smart and politically savvy man. He may have been, but his style of speech and use of uncommon words gave everyone the impression that he knew it all, whether he did or not.

In interviews after his death, his close friends said that when the camera was off and he was kicking back with a martini with the rest of his rich friends, he spoke like everyone else.

I was pulling out of my subdivision the other day and had to stop for an oncoming car. On the other side of the road, waiting to cross, was a young family, on their way to the park. There was a mother, father, and two young girls, around eight and ten years-old.

As the car approached, I noticed he was flying a full-size flag off the rear of the car.

Sure enough, as he passes by, there it is in full giant letters ? ?F ?Expletive' Trudeau.? I looked over at the young family. The mother looked over at her husband, he just shook his head as he watched his two young daughters read the flag.

I saw another guy in town place that same flag in the front window of his house. What a lovely sight for the neighbors and their children.

I understand there are groups that are opposed to some, or all of Justin Trudeau's policies, and they certainly have the right to both disagree and if necessary, organize and protest.

I have issues with several of his policies as well, so I certainly understand where they are coming from.

But is this type of public dissent really necessary or acceptable? Why drop to the lowest common denominator of language to prove your point?

There must be at least 50 others words that are no longer acceptable because someone will be offended, and yet, one of the most vulgar words in the language is perfectly okay and no one is offended?

If you really want to be taken seriously and have more people take interest in your point of view, try speaking like you gave some thought to your ideas.

You catch more flies with honey, and you will attract more interest in your ideology if you present your thoughts and ideas coherently without resorting to what used to be called ?bad language' to make your point.