

Episode 57: Watch Your Language: The Power of Words

The words we use have more power than we give them credit for. We take words for granted. Several years ago I remember reading a person's blog about a child who was scolded the Costco store while his parents were waiting in return line. The child started to get restless as many children would have. You can watch the confident child who was playful shrinking down into silence. Words can deflate and destroy or words can create confidence and empower. Words do matter.

You may have heard statements throughout your childhood from teachers, parents, coaches, or even your peers. The statements good or bad you have allowed to grow -for they planted a seed. The seed you had a choice to either hold onto and play over and over in your mind or reject it. The seed only grows when you nurture it or give it attention. You may have even heard people making fun of others in derogatory ways. Even with joking, people do not always realize that they can be hurtful.



“An Old Cherokee Tale of Two Wolves

One evening an old Cherokee Indian told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, ‘My son, the battle is between two ‘wolves’ inside us all. One is Evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.

The other is good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith.’

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: ‘Which wolf wins?’

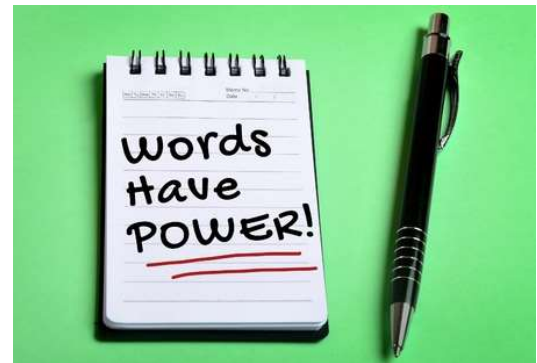
The old Cherokee simply replied, ‘The one you feed.’” – Native American Legend

When we look at communication, we pay attention to the words but also to the tone and intent of what is being said. People make judgments very quickly. **It is important that you choose to speak impeccably about yourself and others.** There is so much

power in the words that we use. I remember when the speaker sharing with me a conversation that occurred in the restroom about one of the other speakers at a conference without realizing that their microphone was on. Not only was it embarrassing for the conference organizers, it was also hurtful to the person that they were speaking about which was broadcasted to the people attending the conference. I never heard the outcome but I sure hope that a public apology occurred.

The other thing I want to remind you is to not judge others by an appearance or get caught up in gossip. If you're upset, take the time to remove yourself from the situation if possible so you can think clearly and speak with intention. When people are upset they often say things that they later regret. **You don't want to burn bridges, you never know where someone is going in their lives which could later influence or impact the direction that you had as well.** If you want others to speak well of you, you must speak well of others.

The words you use become your reality. The thoughts and feelings that you have influence the actions and words that you speak. If you say "I am not enough" and think and believe this, your actions will follow. You will not fully give of yourself because you believe you're not enough. You'll end up sabotaging yourself by holding back on what you're capable of. You may even tell yourself "why bother?" If you say, you're "not smart enough", you will take actions to support that or look for ways to rationalize why this may be the truth. You may speak words of lack and scarcity and because that is your focus that's what you will see in your reality. If you speak of abundance and use positive words, you will see abundance in your life and show gratitude. Remember you are planting seeds when you speak whether it is about yourself, about others or to others.



In Dr. Marshall Goldsmith book, *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*, he talks about Habit #5: Starting with "no", "but", or "however". When he was working with a coaching client, he would charge them \$20 every time they stated no, but, or however in a statement. One CEO he was working with within an hour was charged \$420 but was later donated to a charity. **When you are using these words with the people you work with, you are stating that they are wrong and you were right.**

"For example, 'That's true, however...' (Meaning: you don't think it's true at all..) Or the particularly common opener, is 'Yes, but...' (Meaning: Prepare to be contradicted.)" –

Dr. Marshall Goldsmith

The statement can be frustrating to the people that you're working with because they see it as a no-win situation.

The word “try” really means that you're totally not committed. In the words of Yoda from Star Wars, “There is no try you either do or you do not.” When I started catching myself saying the word try I also asked myself if I was wholeheartedly in or just interested. What I learned was if I really want something to happen I need to make a choice to do something not just to dabble in it. What are you “trying” to do and wondering why it's not working?

In conversation sometimes I'll hear someone say, “I think this.. is possible”. You want to speak with conviction **you must know and believe something to be true**. I think comes across as wishy-washy not something spoken with conviction and intent.

Beware of extreme words. These are words such as always and never. Is it true that someone always does something 100% of the time? Is it true that someone never does what they're told hundred percent of the time? The word “can't” also be considered extreme as you either you can or you cannot. Many people focus on what they can't do that they never can realize what they can do if they only put in the effort. They talk themselves out of even making the attempt before even doing something.

When you hear people come up with great ideas or do something outstanding, take the time to give these people credit for their ideas. **Your voice and message have so much power.** You never know who needs to hear those words of encouragement and how their lives can be changed because you took the time to listen for acknowledging something that they have said. **The change that we wish to see the world begins with us and** it begins with the power we have with the words we use. Don't abuse the power. Use the power to build others up and help them step into the potential of food they have yet to be.

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DEBRA KASOWSKI, BScN CEC is an award-winning best-selling author, transformational speaker, blogger, and Certified Executive Coach. She has a heart of a teacher and is certified in Appreciative Inquiry and Emotional Intelligence. Her writing has been published in a variety of print and online

magazines. Debra Kasowski International helps executives, entrepreneurs, and organizations boost their productivity, performance, and profits. It all starts with people and passion. Sign up the Success Secrets Newsletter and get your free mp3 download today! www.debrakasowski.com

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