

Words Matter

Are You Tearing Your Marriage Down with Your Words?

You always...

You never...

That's so stupid...

What were you thinking?

You're just like your mama...

You're just like your daddy...

I can't believe you did that...

We've all heard the saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." Many of us heard this growing up. But the truth is – words can hurt us and negative words can really damage a marriage.

We've all been hurt by words at one time or another. We know the pain a sarcastic comment can cause. We know how much a nasty remark can hurt. So why do we allow these hateful, hurtful words to come out of our mouths? And why do we say the most hurtful things to those we love the very most – our spouses? Why do we ignore how powerful words can be?

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James 3:5-8 says this:

"Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison."

"A restless evil full of deadly poison." There's not a better way to say it than that. The words we say have power. They can hurt or heal – tear down or build up – undermine or encourage. No matter how our marriages grow in maturity, we always seem to find ways to hurt each other, either intentionally or unintentionally. And with every offense comes pain.

Sometimes we don't recognize the inner pain right away; other times, we just try to hide it. Sometimes we don't tell our spouses when they have wounded us because we don't want to appear vulnerable; we suppress the hurt and act as if nothing happened.

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You've probably found yourself in a situation like this. For some, hurtful words have become the norm in some of our marriages.

Some spouses dread going home from work because they know their spouse will have something hurtful to say to them.

Some spouses avoid talking with their spouse about issues that are troubling them because they worry their spouse will ridicule them for their concerns.

Some spouses have become so beaten down because of years of hurtful, hateful words that they see themselves as worthless.

A critical tone, directed from one spouse to another, can lead to unpleasant marital problems. It's not the occasional complaint or conflict, but a nonstop tone of negativity.

What does this look like? It might include these things: |
Sarcasm, nit-picking, nagging, hateful language, cutting each other down, saying hurtful things, and the constant retrieval of painful issues from the past (i.e. that's why your daddy left your mamma or that's why your mamma left your daddy.)

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What we say has powerful implications on our marriages and all other relationships (i.e. imagine a parent telling his/her child in their adolescent years "You gonna amount to nothing! You never have and you never will!") This child will probably be affected by these words for a long time, if not for his/her entire life. As a matter of fact, words have a way to either building up a person or tearing a person down.

Proverbs 18:21 says "The tongue has the power of life and death."

What we say has a mighty effect on those around us. Men want to be admired and appreciated, and words help communicate those things.

Women have a need for open, honest, and loving communication. Those things are nourished by the words of their husbands.

A happy, healthy marriage is characterized by positive words. They give life. Likewise, negativity and criticism are almost always evident in a bad marriage. They bring death.

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James wrote, they are (the mouths and tongue) "a world of evil."

Does that mean we should never complain about anything? Absolutely not. A gentle, helpful complaint can be an excellent corrective. It tells your spouse that you care, and it can strengthen your relationship. But such complaints need to be infrequent and delivered with care.

For instance, "Honey, I'm committed to our marriage, but I just need to say this: It really bothers me when you..."

That's easier to hear, isn't it?

Such a statement can lead to positive change. But a constant barrage of complaints, day in and day out, rarely helps. Most often, it hurts. It hurts individually, and it hurts the marriage.

One of the most important principles in Scripture is that of sowing and reaping. From the beginning of Creation until now, the law of seedtime and harvest has been in operation, affecting every aspect of our life here on earth.

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For instance, in the agriculture world, the animal kingdom and even in human reproduction, we easily can understand how a seed implanted will produce a harvest. But do you realize the principle of sowing and reaping is always in progress in our marriages as well?

In fact, our mouths are seed warehouses. Words are some of the most powerful seeds we sow--they are so powerful they can have a disproportionate effect on our marriages. By that I mean our words have the ability to affect our spouses and marriages more than almost anything else.

Remember, bad seeds produce bad crops. Of course, the same law of sowing and reaping applies when good seeds are sown. Your harvest then will be a good one! It may not be an instant harvest, but it is a guaranteed one.

There are some husbands who expect they can harshly criticized their wives throughout the day, talk to them harshly all day, ignore her the entire day and then at night expect her to be in this loving mode so he can have his desires fulfilled. It does not work like that!

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On the other hand, there are some wives out there who think they can say whatever they want to say, however they want to say it, be as nasty saying it as they want and then expect their husbands to respond in a godly fashion without fail. It does not work like that!

If you realize you've planted bad seeds into your marriage, and you are paying a price for that now, you can do something about it.

You can kill off a bad crop by simply repenting before God and your spouse for your negative words and actions.

Then begin planting a new crop by carefully and purposefully sowing good seed in your marriage and all areas of your life.

Approach your husband or wife today with positive words. Plant good seeds, and you'll see good fruit result.

Every good marriage is the result of sowing and reaping. And, even if your spouse isn't doing the right thing----- you can.

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The power of the good seed you sow is greater than any bad seed your husband or wife may sow.

Say what the Bible says about your spouse and your marriage—

"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."- 1 Peter 4:8

"Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." - Ecclesiastes 4:12

"Be completely humble and gentle; Be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace."- Ephesians 4:2-3

"For I know the plans I have for you, 'Declare The Lord,' plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."- Jeremiah 29:11

"Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."- Mark 10:9

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Speak God's Word over your situation. That seed has the power of God to turn any situation around!

Remember: When you know better, Do better.

Bro. and Sis. Nelson 