

Did You Know Words Can Relieve Stress?

The Bible says, “Pleasant words are like honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones” (Prov. 16:24). Mother Teresa had a saying: “Let no one come to you without leaving happier and better.”

There are words and phrases we can use that soothe and calm not only the person who hears them, but also the person who speaks them.

Two of my patients—a husband and wife—were having marital problems. They had seen a marriage counselor a few times, and I noticed a change in the way they related to each other. They were no longer critical of each other but were kind, loving and respectful toward one another.

I was rather amazed at this fairly sudden turnaround, and I asked them about it. They told me that the marriage counselor had told them to change their speech. The counselor had asked them a simple question that had jarred each one of them to their core: “If you were on one phone call you could make, whom would you call, and what would you say?” The couple had been stunned at this question. The counselor quickly went on, “And why are you waiting?”

The couple turned to each other, and each one apologized for saying hateful, critical things to the other. They reaffirmed their love for each other and agreed to begin speaking encouraging, kind and gentle words from that day on.

The change in their relationship was tremendous. The stress they had produced in their relationship as a result of their contentious, angry and quarrelsome speech began to evaporate. The environment of their relationship became of peace and harmony.

Proverbs 21:23 says, "Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles." Colossians 4:6 tells us, "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one."

We need to think before we speak and weigh what we say so that we truly do know the most beneficial thing to say to each person in each situation.

Look for ways in which to reinforce the good behaviors of other people. Look for attributes and behaviors about which you can give sincere compliments—phony compliments are perceived as manipulative. Only compliment what you can compliment with a genuine heartfelt sincerity.

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