



I Want Happiness Now!

By Dr. Henry Brandt with Phil Landrum

LESSON 6: EVALUATING THE WAY YOU TALK

WORDS, WORDS, WORDS...

The use of words is the most common subject that comes up in my consulting room. This is a difficult subject to write about, because words get tangled up with the emotions as well as with a person's mental activity.

With words, we compliment and praise one another. Our words can be comforting, helpful, supportive, instructive, revealing all those good things that are on our minds.

...I'M SO SICK OF WORDS

On the other hand, words can cut, hurt, or tear someone up without leaving a mark. Words can be used to deceive, mislead, or conceal what is on your mind.

They speak falsehood to one another; with flattering lips...they speak (Psalm 12:2).

The tongue is a deadly arrow; it speaks deceit; with his mouth one speaks peace to his neighbor, but inwardly he sets an ambush for him (Jeremiah 9:8).

Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him (Proverbs 29:20).

Many people have long ago forgotten the spankings received as a child but can recall vividly some of the tongue lashings and hostile criticisms received along the way.

Married couples who seek counsel have long ago forgotten the tender words exchanged between themselves but can easily recall some of the stinging, sarcastic, critical, deceptive words that seem to weld themselves on their minds. As the Bible puts it:

For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well. Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they may obey us, we direct their entire body as well. Behold, the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder, wherever the inclination of the pilot desires. So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. Behold, how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed, and has been tamed by the human race. But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father; and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way (James 3:2-10).

It is clear that you either build up or chip away at your self-respect by your choice of words.

LOOK AT THE NEGATIVE SIDE

Hasty, careless, impulsive words can turn a pleasant day into a nightmare.

Wally bounced out of bed in a good mood. He greeted his wife with a friendly hug and kiss. They had a pleasant breakfast together, and after a tender good-bye kiss, he headed for the garage—whistling a tune to himself.

He was pleased with himself because he got an early start and would be able to get some desk work out of the way before the start of a busy day.

Everything changed when he put the car key in the switch and glanced at the gas gauge. It was on empty.

"I told that #\$%&* wife of mine to put gas in the car when she used it last night. And she didn't do it!"

Wally was seething as he waited at the gas pump for the tank to be filled. Already, he was rehearsing what he would say to his wife that night.

It was a busy day, so the gas-tank episode was forgotten until he headed home. The closer he got to home the angrier he became.

Wally slammed the door of his car and headed for the house. He brushed past his wife, mumbling a gruff:

"Hello."

"What's wrong with you?" she asked.

"Nothing!"

"There must be something wrong," she mused.

She pressed for an answer.

"Did you have a rough day at work?" She had no idea what was going on underneath his skin, or she might have had some second thoughts about pursuing the question.

Then he unloaded.

"Yes, I had a rough day. I left early to get some desk work done, only to find an empty gas tank. So instead of getting a head start, I spent my time sitting beside a gas pump."

"Didn't I tell you to put gas in the car? Why don't you listen to me? Why is that I can never depend on you? I'm fed up with your lack of consideration. All you think about is yourself."

His wife burst into tears.

"Quit your bawling," he went on. "Do I have to put up with an emotional woman on top of your irresponsible behavior?"

Before he was halfway through, Wally was sorry he had started his tirade. But once he got started, he figured he might as well finish it.

If his employees ever tried talking to him that way, he would have fired them. He wouldn't think of speaking to his friends the way he just addressed his wife.

By now, the children were listening, too.

"You kids...get out of here!" He shoved one of them backward and kept on yelling.

By spewing out this torrent of words, Wally made a fool of himself and felt foolish about it. But the words were out.

He was especially disturbed over his choice of words and the manner in which he delivered them. This wasn't the first time this happened. He ruined many an evening with his sharp tongue and then had to figure out how to patch things up.

A NASTY TONGUE

The telephone rang. It was for Ange, the sixteen-year-old daughter in the family.

On the other end of the line was a young man the family didn't approve of—asking Ange to go to a party at the home of another friend Ange's parents didn't approve of. Ange accepted the invitation, hoping to talk her folks into letting her go.

When she hung up, Ange took a stab at changing her parents' minds.

"Can't I please go?" she pleaded.

"You know the answer," her mother replied.

"Aw, come on, please let me go. All the kids but me will be there. Please let me go. Dad, tell mom to let me go."

"You heard your mother. You knew what we would say when you agreed to go."

"Oh, please. . . just this once?"

"The answer is no!" her dad repeated.

Then Ange launched out on a speech.

"You never let me do anything. I hate this place, and I hate you. When I get a little older, you will be sorry, because I'm going to clear out of here and do whatever I please. All you do is make life miserable for me. You must hate me to treat me like you do. None of my friends have to take the guff I take around here. You don't care about me at all. I hate you."

Wow! Quite a tirade for a teenager. Her parents kept quiet and let her continue until she ran out of words. She was feeling miserable before she finished.

Actually, Ange didn't disagree with her parents' judgment. But, again and again, she would sass her mother, or tell off the whole family, or lash out at anyone who crossed her. She caused herself no end of trouble socially, and often ended up disgusted with herself.

WHAT'S BEHIND IT ALL?

These people violated some basic commandments. Here are some of them:

He who guards his mouth and his tongue, guards his soul from troubles
(Proverbs 21:23).

And I say to you, that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned (Matthew 12:36-37).

He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him (Proverbs 18:13).

If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless (James 1:26).

GRIPING AND COMPLAINING (ROAST BOSS FOR LUNCH)

Three men who worked together shared a common distaste for their jobs. Every day at the lunch table, they would rehash the rude comments their boss fired at them and discuss with one another how much they despised him.

Their boss was indeed a very difficult man to live with. I suppose everyone sooner or later faces the problem of what to do with a difficult person in life. The Bible says:

Do all things without grumbling or disputing (Philippians 2:14).

A perverse man spreads strife, and a slanderer separates intimate friends (Proverbs 16:28).

...malign no one, to be uncontentious, gentle, showing every consideration for all men (Titus 3:2).

These men were chipping away at their own self-respect by their choice of a subject at the lunch table.

LYING AND DECEIVING (ADVICE FROM A GOLF EXPERT)

Gordy was golfing with Al, who was a par player. On the way to the course, Gordy explained that he was just an occasional golfer and not very good. Al offered to give Gordy some tips as they went along. The offer was accepted.

At first, Gordy appreciated the help.

Watch your head...now...you need a little more grass on that shot...raise your left shoulder...keep your eye on the ball...you should use a different club.

On and on went the instructions, until Gordy was getting knots in his stomach. All he really wanted was to knock the ball around the course.

"Want another tip?" Al asked.

Instead of admitting that he was already confused and annoyed, Gordy replied:

"Sure I do. It's not often I get to play with someone who can help my game. You are a good teacher."

His deception and flattery needlessly put him in a position that spoiled his whole day.

LYING TO THE DIRECTOR

The work director of a college had summoned a student to tell him of a job opening. Before sending him to this assignment, however, the director wanted to clear up a report that this student had been disorderly on various occasions.

The student denied the report and was given the assignment. A week later, he returned to admit that the report was true.

He had been in torment for a week. Even if it meant losing the work opportunity, he wanted to get the record straight.

DECEIVING HIS FRIENDS

Steve created an unnecessary situation for himself. He was visiting some friends who in turn took him to visit some of their friends. It came time for supper.

"We can go out to eat if you like," said the hostess. "We have every kind of restaurant you can think of around here. Or, since I've made some vegetable soup today, we can stay home and eat that. It makes no difference to me which we do. Since Steve is our guest, and we don't know what he has eaten today, let's let him decide."

That's a tough spot for a guest. Steve answered with a question:

"Does anyone have anything against staying here and eating soup?" All four people said they'd just as soon stay home.

"Great," said Steve. "Then let's just stay here and eat soup."

On the way home from the visit, Steve said to his friends:

"Boy, can I get something to eat? I didn't have any lunch today, and if you noticed, I didn't eat much. I hate soup—especially vegetable soup."

His friends were astounded.

"Why, Steve, we asked you if you wanted something else. Do you think we didn't mean it?"

"Well, I didn't want to offend or inconvenience anyone," Steve said. Instead of gaining admiration for his "sacrificial" choice, his friends wondered when they could believe Steve.

DECEPTION LED TO TENSION

Mrs. Merton was referred to me by her physician because a reasonable prescription for "nerves" was not helping.

She finally admitted to me that she had lent her car to a friend, who was involved in an accident with the car.

Knowing that her husband would be furious because she had loaned out the car, Mrs. Merton decided to tell him she had been in the accident.

To deceive her husband was simple enough, but she hadn't anticipated the complications: coaching her friend on what to say, keeping her husband away from the collision shop, and slipping police reports past him.

It became especially complicated when the repairs were made poorly and required two extra visits to the garage, which involved the insurance agent over and over again. The cover-up resulted in unbearable and unnecessary tensions for Mrs. Merton.

I frequently listen to people explain their reasons for lying on the grounds that if they were to speak the truth, the other person would hate them, get angry, or have hurt feelings.

What a delusion to assume that the key to good fellowship is lying and deceit. On the other side of the coin, my clients tell me how disappointed they are when they discover they have been deceived or lied to.

Sir Walter Scott penned two pithy lines that caught my attention:

*Oh, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practice to deceive!*

It is easy to understand why such seemingly insignificant incidents are so disturbing to people when they are aware of what the Bible has to say about lying and deception:

Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who deal faithfully are His delight (Proverbs 12:22).

Put away from you a deceitful mouth, and put devious lips far from you (Proverbs 4:24).

There are six things which the LORD hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers (Proverbs 6:16-19).

A lying tongue hates those it crushes, and a flattering mouth works ruin (Proverbs 26:28).

GOSSIP AND WHISPERING (THE DAY I "LEFT MY WIFE"!)

The Bible says:

The tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. Behold, how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire (James 3:5).

A simple little incident that happened to me has made that verse very meaningful. I was once speaking to a large gathering. During one of the breaks, a conferee came up to greet me.

"Hi, Henry, haven't seen you in a long time. Is Eva [my wife] with you?"

"No," I replied. "I left her...." At that moment someone else interrupted by asking a question. I never finished my sentence concerning my wife.

Later that day, a friend's wife approached me and said:

"What's this I hear about you and Eva? You're separated?"

"Separated?" I was astonished. "Where did you hear that?"

"One of the ladies told me. She heard that you told one of the men that you'd left Eva."

"No, we're getting along just fine," I replied.

"That's strange," she said. "I've heard it from several women."

THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED

It took me a while to think over my conversations of the day. Then I recalled my brief encounter with the man who asked if Eva was with me.

This is what happened. When I said, "I left Eva..." and turned to respond to someone else, he concluded that I didn't want to talk about it. He was troubled and disappointed that I would be speaking about family life when I was separated from my wife.

When he went to his hotel room, his wife was there. So he said to her:

"Did you know that Henry has left Eva?"

His wife asked someone else about it, and so the rumor got started.

Here are the facts. Eva and I were invited to go cruising on a friend's yacht. We were having a grand time enjoying the beauty and peacefulness of the Bahamas.

It came time for me to go to this conference, but it is a long, hard journey from Miami to San Francisco, where the meeting was held.

Our friends urged Eva to stay in the Bahamas with them. I would have liked to stay myself, but we agreed that Eva would stay.

This man wanted to know if Eva was with me. My reply was interrupted by someone else, so all he heard was: "I left her...." I never got to finish my sentence: "...on a yacht in the Bahamas."

TAKING ON A RUMOR

The next time I took the platform to speak, I told the entire assembly about the incident as an example of how communications can get fouled up.

Apparently, some people didn't believe me. A year later, in Portland, a minister very gingerly brought up the subject:

"Did you leave your wife?"

THREE YEARS LATER...

Three years later, an associate of mine reported this incident to me. One of his secretaries asked him:

"How can you be associated with Dr. Brandt when he and his wife are separated?"

Behold, how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire!

AN EDUCATOR IS CHARGED!

The dean of a college was called into a board meeting to answer charges that at night he was seen prowling around the windows of a women's dormitory.

He was told that there were a dozen witnesses who reported his behavior. It wasn't just one incident. They reported he was seen there regularly.

The dean was flabbergasted. He insisted that there was no truth to the reports. But how could a dozen eyewitnesses be wrong?

Then it dawned on him. The garage that housed the school cars was located behind the women's dormitory. This dean frequently went out at night to speak at various meetings. He used a school car for transportation.

When the board investigated, they found out that his facts were true. One night, after he put the car in the garage, a student was looking out her window and saw the dean walking behind the dormitory.

She was amazed and told her roommate that she saw the dean window peeping.

They told some other students, who, in turn, kept an eye on the back of the dorm to see if it happened again. Sure enough, they spotted him behind the dormitory week after week.

The news spread rapidly throughout the campus and in letters back home to parents: our dean is a window peeper.

GREAT EVILS...

We tend to be aghast when we learn that someone has stolen something or committed adultery, but we little realize how great a fire such a small member as the tongue can set by whispering and gossiping.

"DON'T TELL" INFORMATION

One day Margaret listened to some "don't tell" information about Sandra, her best friend. The informer was supposed to be one of Sandra's closest friends, too. A few days later, Sandra asked Margaret point-blank:

"Did you hear that I stepped out on my boyfriend last Saturday night?"

Not in the habit of lying, Margaret was forced by the truth to answer: "Yes."

Sandra was stunned. "Who told you, Margaret? It's important that I know."

Caught between two loyalties, Margaret wished she had not listened to this whispering. Now, it seemed that no matter what she said or didn't say, Margaret stood to lose a friend. That's the danger of secret, don't-say-I-told-you conversations. They lead to strife, tension, and severed relations.

Note what Solomon wrote:

The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels, and they go down into the innermost parts of the body (Proverbs 18:8).

For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, contention quiets down (Proverbs 26:20).

Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms shall be proclaimed upon the housetops (Luke 12:3).

The Bible says that hasty words, a fiery tongue, concealing your true thoughts, complaining, slandering, lying, deceit, and whispering are unacceptable to God.

Your own sense of self-respect depends in part on your knowledge of how you manage your own words.

THE POSITIVE SIDE

We described the negative side. There is also a positive aspect to the use of words. Take a look at these Bible verses:

A man has joy in an apt answer, and how delightful is a timely word (Proverbs 15:23).

Words from the mouth of a wise man are gracious, while the lips of a fool consume him; the beginning of his talking is folly, and the end of it is wicked madness (Ecclesiastes 10:12-13).

Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances (Proverbs 25:11).

Righteous lips are the delight of kings, and he who speaks right is loved (Proverbs 16:13).

Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones (Proverbs 16:24).

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger (Proverbs 15:1).

The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver, the heart of the wicked is worth little (Proverbs 10:20).

A soothing tongue is a tree of life, but perversion in it crushes the spirit (Proverbs 15:4).

GOOD WORDS IN BAD TIMES

The Bible story of Joseph gives us a good example. His brothers, who despised him and determined to get rid of him, sold him into slavery.

Joseph, however, after many trials and difficulties, achieved a place in Egypt second only to the king. When a time of famine came, Joseph was given charge of distributing food. His brothers had to go to Egypt to get some food, and were aghast when they discovered who Joseph was.

To compound their fear, their father died during this time. They decided to send Joseph a message, begging for mercy. This was the message:

"Your father charged before he died, saying, 'Thus you shall say to Joseph, 'Please forgive, I beg you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin, for they did you wrong.'" And now, please forgive the transgressions of the servants of the God of your father.'" And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also came and fell down before him and said: "Behold, we are your servants." But Joseph said to them: "Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place? And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. So, therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them (Genesis 50:16-21).

Comforting, kindly words—backed by appropriate action, and based on Joseph's faith in God, *not on the behavior of his brothers*. What a relief this must have been to them!

USING YOUR TALK TO PUT PEOPLE AT EASE

A small child accidentally spilled her milk. She looked anxiously up at her mother, who quietly said:

"You put your glass too close to your elbow, didn't you?" One could see the relief on the child's face. It certainly was better than just lashing out at the child, wasn't it?

Her words taught the child how to avoid repetition of the incident.

Later that evening, the small child was reluctant to go to bed. Quietly, but firmly, the mother said:

"You are to go to bed!" The child still didn't go, so mother took her by the arm and firmly directed her toward the bedroom.

One could see the child stiffen, and then give up as mother continued:

"You need a good night's sleep."

This mother set the tone in her family by her soft answers that issued from a kind heart, again backed by appropriate action.

Once I told this story to a group of mothers. One lady in the audience was in the habit of giving her children tongue lashings over spilled milk. On the spot, she breathed a prayer of repentance and asked God to teach her to speak lovingly and quietly.

That same night, her child spilled some orange juice. To her surprise, the lady said quietly:

"Next time, keep the glass away from your elbow."

Amazed and wide-eyed, the child looked at her mother and said:

"Would it work if I spilled some milk?"

This lady couldn't wait to tell me about the change in her the next time our paths crossed. Is it not obvious that such conversation is necessary if we are to have congenial relations with each other?

SOFT TALK IS NOT NECESSARILY "SISSY TALK" OR "WEAK TALK"

The positive use of words does not imply a namby-pamby, spineless person who has no opinions or takes no action. We are surrounded by responsibility for employees, fellow laborers, family members, and friends. Frequently, everyone must deal with the evil intentions of other people.

God said of Himself:

Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous, therefore, and repent
(Revelation 3:19).

Jesus, when instructing His disciples, taught them:

Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him...and if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, "I repent," forgive him (Luke 17:3-4).

In his second letter to Timothy, Paul instructed him:

Preach the word: be ready in season, and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction (2 Timothy 4:2).

Again, Paul instructed Timothy:

Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity (1 Timothy 5:1).

To the Ephesians, he wrote:

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear (Ephesians 4:29).

A few years ago, I was pondering the meaning of a verse having to do with our relations to one another:

Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24).

While I was mulling over the meaning of that verse, a friend shared the following incident that confirms that passage.

ANGER OVER THE CAR REPAIR

My friend was involved in a conversation with a man who was very angry over the poor service he was subjected to while getting his car repaired.

As he listened, the thought occurred to him that he should stimulate the angry man to love that mechanic. Surely he would be better off if he could get rid of that anger.

But, how do you proceed without a chance to think it over first?

A statement made by Jesus occurred to my friend, so he decided to give it a try.

"It's a pity to let a mechanic spoil your day. He isn't even here, yet his poor performance is bothering you. Your attitude surely isn't affecting him any. He's on the other side of town. Listen to a statement that Jesus made:

(God)...causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and unrighteous (Matthew 5:45)."

"Sure, you got a bad deal. Why don't you just forgive him, and ask God to give you love for him? It would change your whole day."

SURPRISE!

The man surprised my friend by saying:

"You're right. I'll do it. How stupid of me to allow this to spoil my day."

Instead of an angry response, the man appreciated the tip.

A HELPFUL SUGGESTION

This incident occurred at a banquet. I was the speaker, seated beside the pastor. It was a family-style banquet, so everyone helped himself. I noted the huge quantity of food he had heaped on his plate. It amazed me to see him take a second helping as large as the first.

He noticed I was aware of what he was doing, and leaned over toward me and said:

"I'm a compulsive eater."

In my mind, I was wondering how to make a stimulating, helpful reply, so I gave it a try.

"There is a better word for it," I said, "and the word is gluttony."

Well, my words did stimulate him. They shocked him.

A year later, I was invited to speak in the same church at the same banquet. What a surprise! The pastor was slimmed down, and was not a bit overweight.

His wife told me that my words indeed challenged him. He even looked up the word "gluttony" in the Greek. He decided that his eating habits were a stumbling block to his people and were not pleasing to God.

But he surprised me by saying:

"You are heavier than you were a year ago."

EATING MY OWN WORDS

"Yes," I explained, "speaking at so many banquets, luncheons, and breakfasts makes it difficult to watch what you eat."

"There is a better word for it," he replied gleefully. "It's called gluttony."

He gave my little speech right back into my teeth. We have become good friends. We stimulate each other. It's a good relationship. Whenever I head toward his part of the country, I am reminded of how we helped each other.

To stimulate, reprove, rebuke, exhort, and instruct one another is to help one another. It's a personally rewarding experience to purpose in your heart to be a positive influence with your words. In writing to Timothy, Paul says:

Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 1:13).

TALK...POSITIVE!

The positive side of using words as indicated in the Bible involves pleasant, righteous, soothing, gentle, kindly words: a soft answer, wholesome, stimulating, reproof, rebuking, exhorting words; with simplicity and godly sincerity.

So, along with David the psalmist, a good objective for anyone can be as he stated it:

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer (Psalm 19:14).

Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips (Psalm 141:3).

Who is the man who desires life, and loves length of days that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil...and do good, seek peace, and pursue it (Psalm 34:12-14).

SOME TIPS FOR RESTORING FELLOWSHIP

1. *When you are aware that someone has something against you, it's your move.*
Jesus says:

If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the

altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering (Matthew 5:23-24).

2. *When you have something against someone else, it's your move.* Jesus says again:

If your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer (Matthew 18:15-17).

What is Jesus saying? Simply that whether you have something against someone, or someone has something against you...*either way it's your move to go to that person and go out of your way to attempt a reconciliation.*

CAUTION

It is not enough to attempt reconciliation if you go with a hostile spirit. The apostle Paul adds another touch:

But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ (Ephesians 4:15).

The goal, then, is not only reconciliation, but also helping each other grow up. You build your own self-respect or self-love as you speak to people rather than *about* them.

A REMINDER

Even if you accept the goals for your words as described in this chapter, be reminded of the problem facing you:

Their tongue is a deadly arrow; it speaks deceit; with his mouth one speaks peace to his neighbor, but inwardly he sets an ambush for him. Shall I not punish them for these things? (Jeremiah 9:8).

Your only hope is to turn to God for help. What He will do for you is described by Isaiah the prophet:

The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of disciples, that I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens Me morning by morning, he awakens My ear to listen as a disciple (Isaiah 50:4).

If you use the Bible as your guide for your choice of words, you are on the road to building up your self-respect and becoming indestructible.

Review Questions:

1. Describe the effects you have seen your words cause, both positive and negative.
2. What are some of the things the Bible says about our tongues and our speech?
3. Your own sense of self-respect depends in part on your knowledge of how _____.
4. It's a personally rewarding experience to purpose in your heart to be a _____ with your words.
5. We must use the _____ as our guide for our choice of words.

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