Words. Are yours healthy or hazardous?

By Andrea Lyle

Words are the vehicle we use to communicate. Whether thought, written or spoken, all words have a vibrational signature that creates a wave (much like a musical note). These “waves” have a significant impact on our being. You’ve likely heard the saying “Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me” -- often used by children as a defense against someone who has just hurt them with words. We all know the truth. Words are very, very powerful. They can, and do, hurt.

When it comes to wellness, we rarely consider how our words affect our health. As a communication device, the body communicates to us via symptoms, while also receiving the communication we deliver to it.

Let’s say you are trying to lose weight. You have tried numerous diets. You exercise like crazy and still can’t shed those pounds. When talking with family and friends, you state how much of a challenge it is for you to lose weight. You might say, “If I just look at food I gain weight!” or “Nothing works for me. I am destined to be fat.” The body hears and believes these statements. It then supports your beliefs by responding accordingly. No matter how little you eat, you gain weight because of the stated belief: “If I even look at food I gain weight!”

Perhaps even more significant are the conversations we have with ourselves. When you look in the mirror and respond with disgust thinking, “I am so fat,” “I am ugly,” or “I hate my body,” your body feels those thoughts and responds physiologically to them. This kind of talk not only makes it nearly impossible to lose weight, but can even cause more health problems. According to the [Mayo Clinic](http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/positive-thinking/art-20043950), negative self-talk can induce physical and emotional stress. It harms cardiovascular health, [gut health](http://health.usnews.com/health-news/patient-advice/articles/2014/11/12/depression-and-your-body-its-physical-too) and the immune system.

Conversely, positive words can actually improve your health and well-being. Words like “I love you,” “I am beautiful,” “I am happy and healthy,” or even a simple expression of gratitude like “thank you” can lower blood pressure, change cholesterol levels, reduce depression, boost the immune system, improve cardiac function and much more.

There are over 700 medical papers detailing the direct effect our words have on our health. Positive words give hope and promote healing. Negative words extinguish hope and can create despair. Dr. Deepak Chopra says, “In ordinary life words can be incredibly powerful, creating instantaneous, often dramatic changes in mind and body. Think of the difference between hearing the words ‘You’re hired’ and ‘You’re fired.’ How many lives have been changed by ‘I love you’? It’s worth remembering that every cell in your body is eavesdropping on the brain, and when you feel hurt or shocked by what you hear, the same shock is occurring to hundreds of billions of cells.” In the same way, when you use or hear words that lift you up, bring you joy, make you feel love, appreciation, and happiness, those hundreds of billions of cells are experiencing the same boost.

Here are some simple ways you can transform your life and promote wellness with your words:

1. Become aware of the language you use when speaking of yourself and of others. Are you degrading, critical, pessimistic and judgmental? Or are you positive, inspiring, accepting, compassionate and loving?
2. Speak positive affirmations about your health and wellbeing. If you are trying to lose weight, speak loving words to your body like “I am grateful for a beautiful body,” “I love being my ideal weight,” or “I am beautiful.” The body will respond to support those words. What you focus on expands. So, focus on the good stuff.
3. Be careful using the declarative statement “I am \_\_\_\_”. Saying things like “I am sick and tired of blah, blah, blah” will ensure you will be sick and tired. Instead, use “I am” to support how you want to feel and what you want to experience. Speak confidently -- “I am loving,” “I am beautiful,” “I am healthy,” “I am grateful,” -- and feel the positive effects in your mind, body and soul.
4. Remember words are only as powerful as the truth you attach to them. If someone calls you a derogatory name and you take offense, you are agreeing to the truth of their statement and perpetuating the belief in your own being -- even when it is not really true. Learn to let it go.
5. Use positive words to lift up others. In the process, you’ll lift yourself.
6. If you are in a conversation with someone who is being negative, try redirecting the conversation in a more positive direction. Plant a seed by letting the other person know you are working on a healthier approach to life by taking a more positive perspective.
7. Say “I love you” as often as possible. The word “love,” and the emotion associated with it, emanates a wave of positive energy that raises the spirits of both speaker and receiver.

Understanding the impact our words have on our wellbeing is empowering. Our words can bring health and happiness, or can degrade and destroy. Each day we have a choice. Choose healthy.

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