

Sticks & stones may break my bones but words can never hurt me. How many agree that is stupid and untrue?

Stick can stones can bruise your body for few days. Words can bruise your soul for years or even decades. Or, words can transform, inspire, life, motivate your life for the better! Words are powerful!

The tongue has the power of life and death... Prov 18:21 (life giving or life taking)

When God created the world... what did he do? Let there be...!

Create—Destroy, Heal—Crush, Build up—Tear down, Life—Death

- **Toxic—anything containing poisonous material capable of causing serious sickness or even death.**

Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. Prov 12:18 T, LG

The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit. Prov 15:4 LG, T

Words that have crushed your spirit (poisonous darts): Why aren't u married? Like your bro?
Hate you. Never loved you. Pathetic. Amt to anyth. Disap. You have a big nose. Mean to do that to hair? What hair?

Illustration: First person that noticed my hair loss

Words that have been Life Giving: Believe in you. Proud. Couldn't love you more.
Amazing. Knocked out of the park, Marry you over again.

Illustration: Maya – kids, Maya loves praise and being called a 'big girl';
Seeing myself as a leader: Kyle approaching me to be fraternity president in college.

Words can take life, or give life. They can be healing or toxic.

- **GUARD YOUR HEART AGAINST TOXIC WORDS.** (words we hear)

Can't control what others say, but you can control what you believe.

My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words... 23 Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. Prov 4:20, 23

Illustration: Leaving business world to go into full time ministry

Guard your hearts against toxic words. You are not the sum total of toxic words spoken about you by faulty men, you are who God says you are. You are created in Christ Jesus to do good works which were prepared in advance for you to do. You are a new creation in Christ Jesus. The old is gone. You are not who others say you are, you are who God says you are.

Truth vs Trash – train yourself to identify (exercise for parents)

People will say hurtful things over and over again. Often times those that you love the most. Live around people that are full of toxic thoughts (critical, negative, discontent, fearful) that are expressed in words and directed at us. Guard your heart. Remind yourself of the truth.

- **SPEAK LIFE-GIVING WORDS TO OTHERS EVERY CHANCE YOU GET.** (words we speak)

Hold any toxic words I might speak. Learn to bite your tongue.

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. Eph 4:29

You will be hurt, offended, react... must keep yourself from speaking toxic words.

Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence...The chain reaction of evil...must be broken, or we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation. -Martin Luther King, Jr.

“A fool shows his annoyance at once, but a prudent man overlooks an insult.” Proverbs 12:16

If you have a struggling marriage, more toxic words than life giving words. Struggling relationship with child, mom, coworker, etc. Little jabs, bullets wrapped with humor, passive aggressive words → if you do, be quick to repent and ask for forgiveness

Rule: When you think something good, say it. (text, write the note, send the email, say it!)

Illustration: Tell Courtney; First words on phone “Wonderful, Beautiful, Hey Sexy, LOVE”

Illustration: Radio testimony—child with special needs

You can do that also – your household, relationships, marriage, work environment can be different.

- **SPEAK LIFE-GIVING WORDS TO YOURSELF AND TO YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES.**

Many wrestle with toxic self talk (toxic thoughts)

...If anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go throw yourself into the sea’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes what he says will happen, it will be done for him. Mark 11:23

Don’t talk about your mountain— tell your mountains about God. Speaking activates faith.

David— everyone else: “he’s too big to fight”, David: “he’s too big to miss” – “Who are you to come against the armies of the living God?” Then he says (1 Samuel 17:45-47):

⁴⁵ David said to the Philistine, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. ⁴⁶ This day the LORD will deliver you into my hands, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. ⁴⁷ All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD’s, and he will give all of you into our hands.”

Not into positive confession—word faith (say it you can have it, blab it & grab it, say it & claim it – I want a BMW and have it... Manipulation of God). God is a sovereign God—I am into agreeing with what God says. Speak words of faith. Words that line up with scripture.

You are not doing what you’ve been called to do because you’ve been believing things that simply aren’t true. You are not who others say you are. Get that poison out of your heart. Forgive that person that spoke it. Stop rehearsing it. You are who God says you are:

- Life always going to be bad... God plans to bless & prosper me, to give hope & future.
- My schedule is insane.... I am equipped and gifted by God...
- Just average.... You are God’s workmanship, created in Christ...
- You are used goods... you are the righteousness of God...
- You’ll never amount to anything... God has plans for me.
- Always going to be miserable... Everything I need for life and godliness

Replace the toxic words with truth. And by truth you speak them. You may not believe them, keep speaking them!

Illustration: Radio testimony—child with special needs

This is from a lady, named Contessa, wrote into a Christian radio station called K-Love and talked about something that a lady said to her seven years ago. Listen to how one word, one sentence impacted someone.

I'm a single mother of four boys. My eight year old son, Titus, was born severely premature at 24 weeks gestation. He has Cerebral Palsy, is profoundly deaf, and has no stomach to feed, so we use a feeding pump into his small intestine.

Seven years ago my pastor's wife, Amy, made a comment that changed my life. One day, Titus was pulling my hair and not letting me put on his leg braces. It was 7:45 a.m., I was supposed to be at work at 7:50 across town. This brought me to tears of frustration. I thought about how unfair this was, when suddenly I remembered something that Amy said to me. She said, "Titus was perfect and everything about him was just as God planned for His glory." I stopped crying, laughed and marveled at God's goodness for allowing me to keep such a perfect child. Thank you Amy, for your uplifting words of God's greatness.

Seven years ago, something that Amy quite honestly, doesn't even remember saying, impacted someone and made a profound difference in her life. What's really cool is now Contessa went on to get her degree and teaches children with special needs in school and she can trace back so much of what she does to one sentence.