

Power of Words: Use a Proper Language with Your Family

PARENTING

ARTICLE

JUL 24, 2020

Hurtful words from loved ones. Hurting loved ones with our words. This article tells us why it happens and how can we use the power of words for good, and not to hurt each other.

Have you ever gone through an unpleasant experience of being lashed with hurtful words from your loved ones? What about the times when we are the guilty party, losing our control of our words, only to regret them later? How can we harness the power of words, so that it can work for us, not against us?

If you want to know the answers, please read on.

Words are something that we cannot take back once we let them out. There is this Malay proverb that says, "You can reverse an overshot boat, but if you overshoot your words, you'd better be prepared for a dire consequence."

All of us are likely to have experienced this. Many can recall those painful episodes in one form or another. Let me highlight this with a true story. Just a few weeks ago, I received an email from a woman who had just gone through a painful situation. She was totally upset because her older brother lost his cool during one family gathering. He started lashing insensitive words over something beyond her control. She reported that her day was destroyed. But the most hurtful thing was this; she was shocked that her brother, whom she loved very much, could say those words. He had made her felt very small and angry.

Does this story sound very familiar? In any relationships, there bound to be arguments and disagreements. However, lashing hurtful words to our loved ones should never happen. The hurt is deep, and the feeling lasts very long.

But why do these kinds of unfortunate incidents still happen time and time again? Why do people who love one another still choose to hurt the other party? What make us, parents, to lose our cool and hurt our children's feelings? Why?

Now, let's explore why these painful experiences happen in our lives. I have discovered that there are at least three major reasons, and I would like to share them with you today.



AUTHORITATIVE ATTITUDE

In the incident I described before, an elder brother scolded his younger sister. She was shocked and didn't expect to be treated that way. Yet, this incidence highlighted something. Sometimes, people with the so-called "family authority" often take their role for granted. They are often not very careful with what they say and do to their loved ones.

Who are these people with family authority? They include all of us. They are the elder brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, and yes, parents too. Like it or not, we are being looked up by the younger siblings, relatives and children. They look at us as a shining example in our daily conducts.

But when people with family authority lost their cool, things can get ugly. This is more so in parenting context. Our kids have trusted us to treat them in the best way possible. They want to be treated full of dignity and respect. But when the wrong words are being used, they would be shocked beyond belief. They will be asking, "I am your loved one. How could you say/do those things to me?" Feelings will be hurt and relationships affected. We have misused our authority as parents. The same is also true with our spouses. When we regularly lashed them with hurtful words, they may even doubt that there was any love left in the relationship. Now, that would be a tragedy.

Having a family authority is a big responsibility, not a privilege. We must always be careful with how we conduct ourselves. We must always watch our words.



TIME BOMB

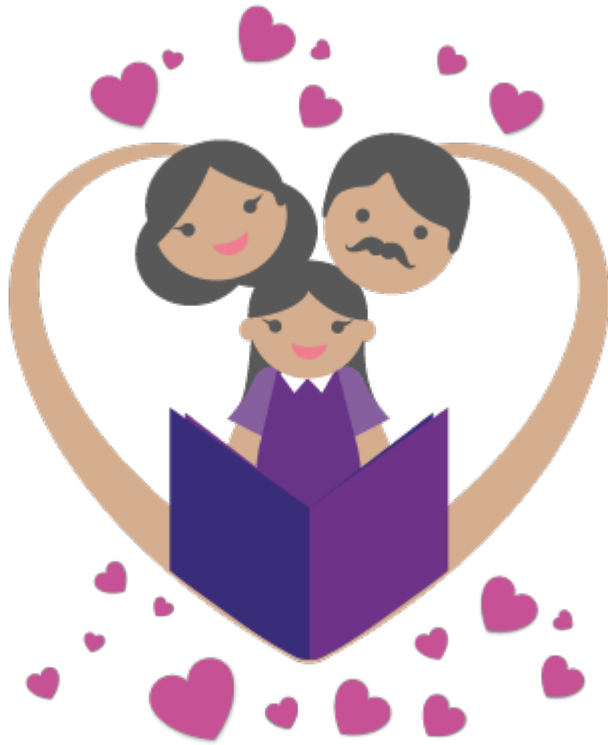
What is this ticking time bomb in our family? Let me highlight this with a common scenario today.

It's common today to observe how some people can be extremely nice to strangers. What's wrong with that, you may ask. It's not wrong, except that at the same time, they are so mean to their loved ones.

Why did this happen? In today's pressured world, this phenomenon is becoming more rampant than ever. This is the ticking time bomb I'm talking about. At work, we are swarmed with work and deadlines. Higher and higher expectations are placed by the employers on their staffs. Coupled with rising cost of living, many people find it hard to cope, let alone be happy and satisfied with their lives.

All these contribute to the pent up feeling inside. The bomb starts ticking. They tried very hard not to let it out to their customers, co-workers or the people on the street. But when they get home, they can't contain it anymore. It just needs some "small" triggers for the bomb to explode.

What can be the triggers? Plenty. A messy home, a noisy child or an annoying sibling can cause the time bomb to explode. When it does, it would destroy the family harmony. It would reverse the hours spent nurturing a happy and loving family.



UNRESOLVED ISSUES

When we used harsh words too many times, it is a clear signal that there could be several unresolved issues. These issues could be internal ones with our own self. It could also be external ones with the people in our lives. Examples of internal issues are dissatisfaction with work, too much stress or an unfinished business. Examples of issues with other people could be unmet expectations, communication problems or difference of opinions.

Whatever the issues are, they should not be left hanging for too long. Otherwise, the burden will be too heavy to carry. We, parents, must make a commitment to resolve them today. Take immediate actions. Don't delay them any longer. The stake is high as it involves our spouses and children. Start with listing down all the things that bother us. Try to tackle them one day at a time. Work with the most urgent one first. Deal with the other issues another day if you can. Don't let them all to get mixed up. Why? They could cloud our judgement. Remember, we cannot lose our cool when dealing with the most important people in our lives – our family.

Let's put all these unresolved issues under control. When we do, we shall be looking at the world in a new light. The children are no longer annoying; instead, they are our source of fun and inspirations. The spouses are no longer our "rivals"; they are now our true life partner. The siblings are no more ordinary people; they are the only people who will always be there in our times of needs.

In conclusion, we must address all the three reasons stated above on why we lose our cool. When we do, we would be kinder to our family. There will be no more harsh

words and ticking time bombs. Now, that would be the best gift we can give to our family - a home that is truly a safe haven for our family.

Disclaimer: This content is shared for informational purposes only and not intended to be a substitute for professional/medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. We recommended that you always seek the advice of your healthcare professional for any questions you may have regarding a medical condition/specific situation.

References:

Zaid Mohamad is a certified parental coach and author of two best-selling books, Smart Parents, Brighter Kids and Smart Parents, Richer Kids.

For details of his current work, please visit www.ZaidMohamad.com or write to him at zaid@smartparents.com.my.

