

THE POWER OF YOUR WORDS

BY BRAD FLURRY

“Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.” –**Mother Teresa**

As children we all heard the rhetoric, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me.” Really? Let’s not kid ourselves. Words are potent. They can build and they can destroy. I once read that a word is like a living organism that is capable of growing, changing, spreading, and influencing your family, team, or organization in many ways; directly and indirectly.

Many years ago as a young platoon commander, I worked with a Marine who was originally from India. He and his family moved to the U.S. at an early age and he decided as a junior in high school to serve his country. During one of our many conversations about his childhood in India, he shared with me a Hindu word, “*Genshai*” –his translation –*never treat others in a way to make them feel small.*

Our discussion reminded me that the importance and power of one’s words is noticed across all cultures. Coming from one’s parent, spouse, friend, or leader, a positive word provides inspiration. It builds confidence, initiative, and trust. Most importantly, it builds courage. Courage to do what’s right. Courage to try new ideas. Courage to make your family, team, or organization better!!

As a spouse, parent, or leader, how are you leveraging the power of your words?

I offer the following three daily challenges to you (think **Public, Private, Protect**):

- 1 PUBLIC:** Publicly speak a work of encouragement / praise to one of your family or team members in front of others.
- 2 PRIVATE:** Privately drop an email or note to one of your people, thanking them for their hard work and encouraging them in their efforts.
- 3 PROTECT:** Protect your family and your team from the damage that your words may cause. This can be done by holding your tongue when angry, frustrated, or tired. You’ll never regret words you didn’t say when you were in those three states of mind.

**WORDS
HAVE
POWER**

Like all powers, the power in your words can build or destroy.
Use them wisely!

On a scale of 1-10 (one being very poor and ten being excellent)

Looking back, how were your parents at using positive words around the home?

① _____ 5 _____ ⑩

On a scale of 1-10 (one being very poor and ten being excellent)

Grading yourself, how are you at using positive words around the home?

① _____ 5 _____ ⑩

If your parents weren't good at using words, have you found it difficult to use positive words? Who is someone you think does a good job at using positive words? What do you see in them that makes them good at word-choice?

What are specific ways you can publicly praise your spouse and kids (individually) this week?

What are some ways you can privately encourage your kids, spouse this week?

What is one thing you have said recently that you wish you could take back? Would you be willing to go to your kids or spouse and apologize this week?