

What *Not* to Say...

You have most likely heard the expression, “It’s not what you say, it’s how you say it,” that implies we need to mind our manners when communicating with patients, staff and professionals as well as be empathetic with our tone and choice of words.

Personally, I feel that **it’s what you say, how you say it and even what you don’t say that will earn you respect** as a great communicator. Here are four suggestions.

First, filter your comments through these three easy questions.

1. Is it kind?
2. Is it true?
3. Is it necessary?

If the answer to any of them is NO, then don’t say it. Taught by Mary Kay, founder of the fortune 500 company that involves thousands of women (although men can use this too) this tip helps keep our communication positive. Gossip is speaking negatively about someone. To avoid gossiping always speak of others as if they are in the room. Hmm...that will change your words quite a bit, and garner a tremendous amount of respect by others for you too.

Second, jokes or comments about race, gender or religion are three areas to completely avoid. We live in a very multicultural society, where equality is a priority. Passing judgment on race, gender or religion can offend someone, or someone that the person knows and respects. Let’s face it, prejudicial comments are totally out of style in this decade, and people disrespect those who discuss others in this way.

Third, listen twice as much as you speak. Our creator gave us two ears and one mouth for a reason. We need to seek first to understand and then to be understood. Deep listening is an amazing relationship builder. When people feel understood their most intrinsic need of the human spirit is met. You can make more friends in 2 months listening to others than you can make in 2 years talking about yourself. Try it... seek to understand and validate what you have heard. It’s harder than you think, but worth its weight in gold.



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Speaking of gold, my Grandma always told me, “Words are silver, but silence is golden,” meaning that sometimes it’s best that we bite our tongue and not say what we are really feeling at the time of an emotional charge. Time is a great buffer zone, and if you don’t want to regret saying something that is impolite or inappropriate learn to be silent, and use time to create the communication that supports your good intentions.

Finally, what we naturally don’t say surrounds the praise, recognition and acknowledgement of each other. Give genuine compliments to those well deserving people in your life. These are deposits into their emotional bank account, and we all want to have rich relationships with those we communicate with. When the time comes to make a withdrawal by communicating constructive feedback, the balance built in the emotional bank account can afford it, and the relationship will not go bankrupt. Thank you for reading and your continued support! (That was a deposit.)

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