

# Health and Wellness

*Provided by Bethany Care Ministry Outreach Program*

## Our Words are Powerful

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You can probably recall years later some kind words someone spoke to you. You would probably tell me they warmed your heart, and you are so thankful for that friend or family member. But sadly it is even easier to recall words that pierced your heart. As a counselor, I have had people tearfully recall to me a sarcastic statement a spouse or friend made years ago. Sometimes that person is no longer living, yet the words still painfully stick in their memory as though they were spoken only yesterday. If only we could feel the sting we are giving before we speak those unkind words.

When I taught school, I was always shocked at how mean and sarcastic some of our youth had become. I often tried to take a student aside and explain the hurt that their words were inflicting on another. Most often I received an eye roll, a laugh or a "so what!" Yet, those very same children clearly had some very low self esteem and were hungry for my encouraging words.

In my counselor training I was taught to help families understand that "put downs" don't work. Our attempts to get even in a disagreement by hurling an unkind comeback will hurt the bond of a relationship and may lead to guilt or

resentment. Guilt is a difficult and painful emotion. An appropriate amount of guilt makes us try to be better. An excessive amount robs us of our own self esteem.

As adults we need to set an example to our children about choosing our words carefully. We all have a



powerful tool in our words, and need to use that tool to inspire, encourage, and give hope to those around us. If anger occasionally takes over, and something hurtful is said or done, realize that we all make mistakes and need to apologize.

This will show your family that you may not always be or act in your best Christ-like

manner. However don't waste that hurt, let it be a teaching moment. Forgive yourself, and then correct the wrong as best as you can with an "I'm sorry...and I still love you." Life is too short to live with guilt and regrets.

*Do you need some help?* If you are over fifty, disabled, or a caregiver and would like some gentle conversation about this or any other mental health issue, call 715-258-3289, for a *free* counseling appointment. Bethany and Trinity are working together for your good mental health.

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