

## Words Hurt, So Don't Say Everything You Think

*By Doug Fields Thriving Marriages email - August 31, 2021*

Words hurt, deeply. Check out this verse from the Bible:

*The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. –Proverbs 12:18*

Not long ago, I was around thousands of people in different environments, watching a multi-day volleyball tournament, visiting attractions and theme parks. I'm a people-watcher by nature and having opportunity to sit closely with people, wait in lines, and gather in crowds, I had lots of time to observe others.

Boiling down my observations into two categories, here's what I noticed:

- 1) *Spouses saying unkind things to one another, and*
- 2) *Parents verbally belittling their children.*

I'm sure these observations don't reveal anything new or surprising, but they occurred so frequently that I couldn't escape noticing. People can be quite nasty to one another. And words hurt.

Since it doesn't take intelligence to be critical, let me suggest one relational principle that has helped me, I realize that this is easier said than done, but it is as simple as this: **don't say everything you think!**

I understand that holding your tongue takes self-control and a degree of humility, but the results are amazing! When someone triggers an emotion in you, and you want to react with a verbal dagger...don't. When someone injures your pride, and you want to say something that will be a zinger comeback and put the other person in his or her place...don't. When someone exhausts your patience, and a strong reaction will make you feel better...don't. Words hurt and are never worth it.

I have a quick wit and a propensity for sarcasm, and with this amazing combination of skills, I create some really strong statements...that no one hears but me. Why? Because as a spouse and parent, I've learned that I don't need to say everything that I think. When I slip up and allow the statements to escape my mouth, I end up wounding others, triggering more reactions, demeaning those I love, heightening tension levels, and create negative memories.

Words are always powerful. But misguided words hurt and they hurt deeply. As today's Scripture points out, using reckless words is like stabbing another with a sword. In almost every instance, it's best to keep the sword in its scabbard.

Try this today: don't say everything you think! Just because you think it, doesn't mean you have to say it. Some words hurt, and those words don't need to be spoken.

### **GOING DEEPER:**

1. *Under what circumstances do you find it most difficult to avoid saying what you think?*
2. *What actions can you take to become more successful at not saying everything you think?*