

'Should' Is A Four Letter Word!

"Language exerts hidden power, like a moon on the tides."

Alcaeus (fl. 611-580 BC), Greek poet, satirist

Well, it's not really a four letter word, but it 'should' be! Along with 'Ought' and 'Must'. How many times do we use those words in a day? "I should get this report written, but....", "I ought to go to that meeting, but....", "I really must try and lose some weight, but....". You fill in the blanks. So why am I getting so uptight about these simple little words? Don't be fooled. These simple words pack a big punch! They are very powerful and often we let them have power over us. By using 'should', 'ought' and 'must' we imply that there will be a 'but' or a 'however' to follow. It carries the unspoken message that the action involved is something we are either not keen to do, that we will continue to avoid doing it, or that someone else is putting the action on us, so that we feel no real ownership of it. Listen to yourself and those around you. How many 'shoulds', 'oughts' and 'musts' are you hearing throughout the day? I am passionate about words and language and beseech, implore, beg, entreat upon you to pay attention to your own! Make language work for you, rather than against you.

Does the language you are using help or hinder you in the pursuit of your goals? Do you use 'should', 'ought' and 'must' liberally? What messages are you giving yourself by the words you use? Take a few moments and think of new words, positive words, that will help you encourage yourself and others to take action towards your aims. Instead of 'I should', how about 'I want to'? Instead of 'I must', try out 'I am going to'. The more you say those affirming phrases the more convinced about, and therefore, more committed to the task in hand you'll become. Go on! Give it a go. What have you got to lose? You've certainly got plenty to gain.

The 'shoulds', 'oughts' and 'musts' are usually a verbal tool to help us avoid doing something. Delve a bit into yourself and see if you can shed some light on what it is that makes you feel this way. Do you need more help before you can get started? Do you feel that this is something that holds no interest for you? Are you afraid? What is behind your delaying tactics?

Using positive language has a positive impression, not only on yourself, but those about you. I am not saying you need to be the life and soul of the party and be false, but think about the kind of impression you want to leave. We all know someone who leaves us feeling low because they are constantly moaning and using negative words. Is that how you want to be?

It's time for new language. Get yourself a dictionary and a thesaurus and get to grips with words. They are so powerful and can help to motivate, as well as discourage. I know which I prefer. Motivating, inspiring, positive language that

can help to get me and others going! Then it's practice, practice, practice. To use new words and phrases fluently takes a bit of time and research – "Instead of this word, what other choices do I have?" Actively seek out opportunities to try out your new vocabulary. The World Wide Web has many free language tools, including dictionaries, thesauruses and quotation sites.

Are those words a cover for not confronting a particular issue? Is it that you feel that the thing you 'should', 'ought' or 'must' do is not something that you really 'want' to do? If it that is the case, rather than continuing to avoid the issue, now is the time to face it and deal with it. Is there a compromise that could be made, or is it time to say "no" and be done with it. Do you really want it hanging over you? What is the worst thing that could happen?

You can get very creative with language. However, most of us seem to use a very limited, repetitive vocabulary. By extending it our creativity will also increase. Even report-writing could become less tedious. Consider the great writers of novels and poetry. They often use language in ways we wouldn't think of – until we start thinking! Even if you find it initially awkward to use the new words you've learnt, it doesn't stop you thinking about them!

As I mentioned above, you can research new words and their usage by taking advantage of the language tools offered, in most cases, for no cost on the web. Like many things, the only cost is time, but consider this: if each one of us learnt just one new word every week how enriched all our interactions would be!

For help in building a positive vocabulary, as well as a positive frame of mind, contact Kate Harper at Harper Coaching on 01540 662196
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Passionate about helping you achieve your goals

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