

Speech That Hurts

We have all heard the adage “Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never hurt me,” yet we all know that this is not true. Words can and do hurt the feelings of others. This is especially true with words that are derogatory toward another’s race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. These characteristics pertain to the very essence of our identity—who we are. When words are used to disparage who we are, they call into question our worthiness as people. So, before you use slurs, think about how it might hurt another person. Before you use derogatory words about someone else, consider the following:

1. Think before you speak. Sometimes, words that may not seem offensive to you may be very offensive to someone else.
2. Before you tell that joke, ask yourself if it pokes fun at someone’s race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. Slurs are no laughing matter.
3. If someone uses a slur in your presence, say something. Let that person know that slurs are inappropriate. Don’t stand silently by. Silence allows those who use slurs to do so with impunity.
4. Remember that discouraging slurs has nothing to do with so-called political correctness and everything to do with caring about the feelings of others, their rights to be free from insults, and their rights to be treated equally, with respect and dignity.

Speech That Hurts

We have all heard the adage “Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never hurt me,” yet we all know that this is not true. Words can and do hurt the feelings of others. This is especially true with words that are derogatory toward another’s race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. These characteristics pertain to the very essence of our identity—who we are. When words are used to disparage who we are, they call into question our worthiness as people. So, before you use slurs, think about how it might hurt another person. Before you use derogatory words about someone else, consider the following:

1. Think before you speak. Sometimes, words that may not seem offensive to you may be very offensive to someone else.
2. Before you tell that joke, ask yourself if it pokes fun at someone’s race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. Slurs are no laughing matter.
3. If someone uses a slur in your presence, say something. Let that person know that slurs are inappropriate. Don’t stand silently by. Silence allows those who use slurs to do so with impunity.
4. Remember that discouraging slurs has nothing to do with so-called political correctness and everything to do with caring about the feelings of others, their rights to be free from insults, and their rights to be treated equally, with respect and dignity.

Kind words
can be short
and easy to speak,
but their echoes
are truly
endless.

- Mother Teresa

Kind words
can be short
and easy to speak,
but their echoes
are truly
endless.

- Mother Teresa