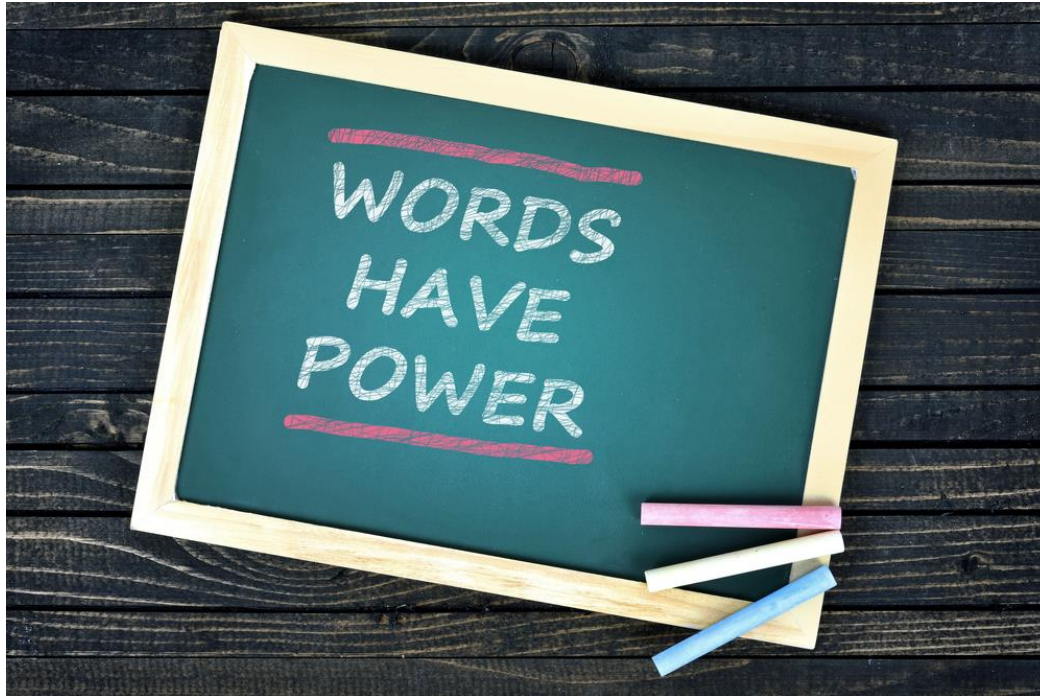


# Pay ATTENTION to Your Words – They Can Change Your World

*By Neen James*



The words we choose to speak – either to the world or to ourselves have the absolute power create impact, connections, positive or negative change and action. When we lose FOCUS and our attention gets drawn away from what we know will move us in the direction we want to go – our words or language often follows suit. To help you stay the course, let's create a productive language palette.

Just as an artist uses a paint palette to choose from a spectrum of colors, the words we choose become our medium to create color, texture, and depth in our communication with the people around us. Those words can be help or hinder. Move us forward or hold us back. To keep you “in the light” – let's look at ways a productive language palette can improve your world.

**Create impact:** In the famous speech *Acres of Diamonds*, delivered over 5,000 times by **Russell Herman Conwell**, a tremendous orator and the founder and president of Temple University in Philadelphia, shares that the resources

to achieve all things are all around us. One of my favorite lines from the speech is *'greatness consists not in the holding of some future office, but really consists in doing great deeds with little means and the accomplishment of vast purposes from the private ranks of life. To be great at all, one must be great here, now. If you wish to be great at all, you must begin where you are, now.'* He compels you with his words to begin your greatness right here, and right now – and an incredible place to start is with your words.

**Choose positive language** – words that lift, empower, ignite passion, present purpose and lighten the way for those around you. Look people in the eye when you speak to them and listen to their responses. Put your phone down and be fully present in those moments and watch how much more productive and compelling they can be. Please pay attention and be selective in your own internal dialogues as well. Too many times people who share extraordinarily kind words with others are their own worst critic. They lift others but not themselves. Let your positivity extend to your own self-talk as well. It's a difference maker, I promise you.

**Create connections:** Words cost us nothing and mean everything. Before you speak, think about the words and impact they will make on the people you are with. I love the Rumi quote that shares, "Before you speak, let your words pass through three gates:

At the first gate, ask yourself, Is it true? At the second gate ask, Is it necessary? At the third gate ask, Is it kind?" It's not always easy to slow our pace of speaking and listening down enough to pay attention to those all too important gates, but life, career, and relationships most certainly shift when we do. Take the opportunity to slow down, connect and show care and compassion instead of trying to quickly share your response, or be so caught up in your next sentence you've missed what was being said. Fully listen, connect and engage – and your relationships will expand and flourish because of that.

**Create action:** Choose action-oriented words when you speak. Eliminate urgency, no one pays attention to words like urgent, ASAP, close of business. These are old phrases that don't make you sound like a relevant and current leader. Remove them. Replace ASAP and close of business by 'talking time', provide a specific time and date i.e. by 4 pm EST. People are busy and overwhelmed; help them prioritize to deliver what you need by being specific.

And PLEASE stop 'shoulding' on people! The word 'should' implies someone else's expectation. You can 'invite' people to 'consider' options, opportunities, considerations ... don't should them!

Make action words part of your language palette. Make action easy for others.

Every day choose words that allow others to feel valuable, to be seen and to be heard. Create conversations that are positive and make people feel like they matter because they spoke with you. We don't have time to do everything, we only have time to do what matters.

If you have never watched the powerful video [Change your words, change your world, click here](#) (it is worth 1 minute and 47 seconds of your time).

I hope this has given you a little word food for thought about how to move closer to the person you want to be and the goals you are eager to achieve. Tell me, how do you use words to create more impact in your conversations?