



Seven Word Shifts That Could Change Your Life

Tool for HeartConnexion® Living

In our casual conversations we assume that we choose words randomly. However, the terms often expose our basic beliefs and “default” attitudes about life being open to change or closed off from hope. If we even unconsciously continue using old “self limiting” wording while working on changing our belief system, it may sabotage the process. Becoming aware of words we use and substituting another word that is more in tune with a new belief makes change more likely. Here are some suggestions:

Changing “You” to “I” or “We”:

“You” statements sound blaming and judgmental and create defensive reactions. “I” indicates personal ownership. “We” emphasizes collaboration and teamwork.

Changing “Should” to “Could”:

“Should” is rooted in some shame source and often creates shame in others. “Could” is open and suggests possibilities exist for acceptance.

Changing “But” to “And”:

“But” discounts what was just said and creates an argumentative communication. “And” is inclusive which communicates respect.

Changing “Try” to “Will”:

“Try” is a word we use when we expect failure and want to make sure we have an excuse for the failure. “Will” risks making a commitment; yet, it assures a higher probability of succeeding.

Changing “Always” or “Never” to “Sometimes”:

Few things in life are “always” or “never.” Either word sets the listener thinking about exceptions to keep from being cornered. “Sometimes” allows the listener to listen without becoming defensive.

Changing “Can’t” to “Won’t”:

“Can’t” often suggests that something other than your personal choice prevents agreement with a request, perhaps implying, ‘I would if I could.’ However, “won’t” accepts personal accountability for your choice and can lead to dialogue about the real issues.

Changing “Mistake” to “Learning”:

“Mistake” often leads to blame-shifting reaction to those who ‘should have known better.’ The question, ‘What have we “learned” from this experience?’ opens up the possibility for growth.

Try a 30-day experiment to change your language in these seven ways. Watch for clues as to how it affects your attitude as well as the response of others to you.

Small Group Sharing:

Which of these shifts will be the most challenging for you to make? Why?

What are the risks you imagine if you shift from Try/Can’t to Will/Won’t?

Who in your life is likely to react most negatively to your making these shifts? Why?

Who can encourage you and help share your accountability? Will you ask them?

How would your life be different if you started using this tool for HeartConnexion living?

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