

The Power of Words

By Maureen Tazzioli

As professional administrators you understand the importance that words, body language and tone have in relaying an overall message. However, do you find that sometimes certain words, like foul language which is grossly inappropriate, bother you more than others? It is as though these words can immediately trigger a negative response.

Imagine for a moment that after working tirelessly preparing a draft report for your supervisor you ask a fellow co-worker for their comments. After reviewing it briefly, they reply with their comment, "whatever... who cares, just go with it...what's the difference anyway?"

Maybe it's just me but words like that can lead a person to feeling hurt and frustrated as a more considerate answer may have been expected.

Helping to alleviate undue stress and frustrations surrounding word usage consider these tips:

- **Review intention** – Always ask yourself whether or not you believe the person intended to hurt you by their response. Sometimes our multi-task tendencies can keep us so busy that when we communicate with each other our responses can appear abrupt or hurtful yet are not intended to be. In addition, if an immediate response does not happen within seconds of a question being asked, it does not mean that the person doesn't care, but rather it may mean they wish to provide a more detailed response to you ensuring to review all information carefully before responding.
- **Remembering the source** - When certain words trigger negative responses try to remind yourself who they are coming from. If it is someone you trust, value and appreciate as a person, chances are you see them as a friend. If this is the case, then ask for clarity or try to apply a little understanding of the situation. If certain words continue to trigger negative responses see if a healthy solution can be found together. Most of us do not wish to hurt a friend but rather will work hard to understand the other's perspective. This can be a helpful resource where positive communications are important to both parties.
- **Understanding the message** - When you focus on the entire message you may notice that certain words being shared are merely to emphasize a point, and not to be taken literally. Try to apply a little understanding in this regard so to refrain from over-reacting.

If you want to rid the triggers that bring about negative responses consider reviewing the intention, remember the source, and stay focused on the message.

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