

Guideline 8 : Thoughtful Speech



Humility	Respect
Patience	Forgiveness
Contentment	Gratitude
Delight	Responsibility
Kindness	Principles
Honesty	Aspiration
Generosity	Service
▶ Thoughtful Speech 8	Courage
16 Guidelines for Life www.16Guidelines.org	

Character Guide: Spibu Thoughtful-Speech

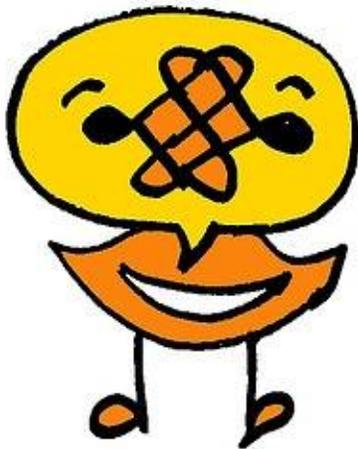


Spibu speaks carefully
using his few words
to help, not harm.



The guides' positive chants
help you to remember the
most important ideas. Say
these over and over to
remember them.

**When I'm wise I
think more, speak less.**



We love to talk, to email, to text, to call.
We love to connect. How you choose your
words is important because as Maya
Angelou, USA, has suggested, others will
forget what you say and do, but "people
will never forget how you made them feel."

Haiku



Sticks and stones break bones.
Cold words hurt me deeper.
Crying hours alone.

Pause before speaking.
To avoid a painful sting,
choose your words kindly.

Gentle to the ears,
honest, thoughtful, wise words rest
warmly in my heart.

Top haiku inspired by a quote by Eric Idle, UK, in [Get Real](#)

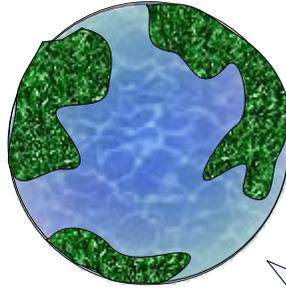
Thoughtful Speech Activities



Try it now: Just Listen!

We have two ears
and one mouth so we
can listen twice as
much as we speak.

Greek philosopher,
Epictetus



No one is as deaf
as the man who will
not listen.

Jewish proverb

To listen well is as
powerful a means of
influence as to talk well,
and is essential to all
true conversation.

Chinese proverb



An important part of Thoughtful Speech is to be able to listen to what others are really saying instead of thinking ahead to what you're going to say next. These games can help you become a better listener.

Games:

Listen Hear

Clap Echo:

One person claps a short pattern and the others echo; the clapper does a little more, the others copy it. Take turns being the clapper.

Repeat After Me:

One person says or reads a sentence. The other person listens and repeats it back exactly. Try it with two sentences, or three, or a list of objects, or numbers.

Telephone:

Sit in a circle. One person whispers a sentence to the next person. See if the sentence can make it all the way around the circle without getting changed, or if, "Mr. Dunn has a crazy cat," becomes, "Sister Dung is a lazy hat," by mistake!

Try it now: Think More, Speak Less – Haiku Workshop



The most unkind things I say are usually said quickly, when I'm angry or when I'm joking around, not thinking about how my words will be heard. Then I wish I had said less. Is this true for you?

One way to be kinder with your words is to get in the habit of choosing words carefully. The Nez Percé leader Chief Joseph said, "It does not take many words to speak the truth."

Careful word choice became an artform practiced in Japan in the writings called 'haiku'. This special, concentrated poetry is now written by people all over the world. Haiku form can vary to suit the language of the author, but one common pattern for these short yet powerful poems looks like this:



first line five syllables
second line seven syllables
third line five syllables



wise white lilies bloom
spring's necklace cast on water
rising through the muck

So what are haiku about? Haiku writers first open their hearts and minds to observe nature and the world and to connect to thoughts within themselves. This connection can then be described using carefully chosen words, expressed as if in one breath, often with a surprise ending.

Learning to write haiku, and to observe the world with fresh 'haiku eyes' – a phrase mentioned in the children's book Haiku by Patricia Donegan -- is fun for all ages!

Word Play:

Two Haiku from You

Write two haiku. First, take a look outside and write a haiku about today's weather or season. Second, think about the Guidelines you have learned about so far. Have any of the ideas surprised you? Write a haiku about any surprises or about any of the 16 Guidelines. Because the poem is short you will need to think a while about how to tell your whole story in only three lines. Share them with us if you like!



Try it now: Words and feelings

Words can be powerful emotional tools. Thoughtful speech is when you use these tools with care and kindness. King Solomon said, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." What do you think he meant?

Try this Word Play to see how powerful words can be.



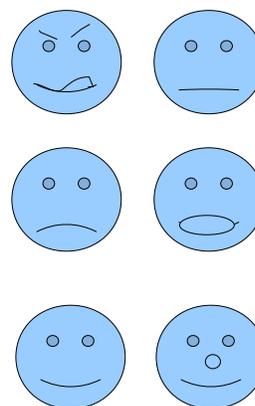
Word Play:

Feel the Power

Fold a piece of paper in half, then in half again, then in a half a third time so you have eight rectangles to write in when you open it up.

Copy one of these words into each rectangle: cookies, puppy, war, anger, house, car, help, peace. Draw a simple face by each word showing how each word makes you feel.

On the back of your paper list eight words of your own choosing, one per rectangle. Write some that make you smile, some that scare you or sadden you and some that excite you. Add faces to these words, too.



Word Play: Mind boggling

Make a list of the words you can make out of the letters in 'Thoughtful Speech'.

You may use the letters in any order. Let us know how many words you came up with altogether.



Try it for real: More than Words



Communication is made up of more than the words you choose. Most (about 90%) of how you communicate about your emotions is not the words you are using at all, but rather your body language and tone. That's why we sometimes say, "It's not what you're saying, it's how you're saying it." If you are up to a real challenge, get your family to help you do this experiment.

Experiment:

Silence is Golden

Choose several hours when you are home to try not using your words. Tell everyone ahead of time you are trying an experiment. Go about your day, but use no words. See if you can use other ways to communicate to get your point across...gestures, facial expressions, or pictures drawn on paper if you must. Be forewarned, you will learn a lot about yourself, but you will need patience! Once you are ready to talk again, even a few words may seem like a gift!

Try it for real: The Magic Word

You may have been taught that the magic word was "please" or "abracadabra" or "open sesame". Many words can be magic and they can change our mood in a moment. Use just a few soothing and gentle words this week to make a big difference to someone.

Word Watch:

Why, Thank you!

Pick a day to say something nice (like a compliment) to everyone you talk with during the day.

Who's on the Line?

Imagine for one day you are being recorded. Everyone can hear all you say, maybe all you think, and the video will be on the internet within the hour! Imagine your role model or spiritual leader or favorite teacher could hear you. Does it change what you would say? Would that be useful?

That was a Great Effort!

Learn to use language to praise you friends' efforts more than their achievements, their choices more than their talents. Research at the [Greater Good Science Center](#) in California has shown this will make them happier and achieve even more!

A Week of Words

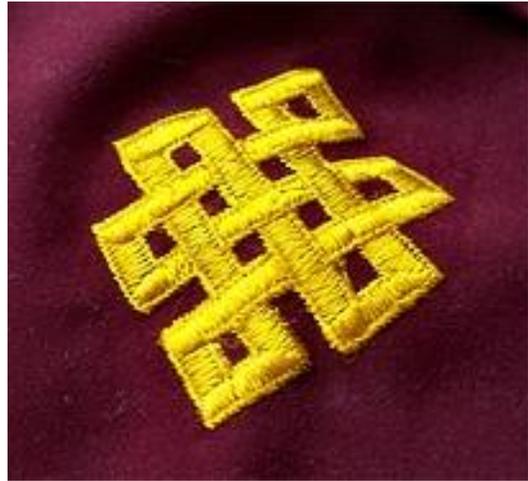




Try it for real: Now That's Skill -- Knot.

I wonder if there was a time during this past week when you heard speech that was not skillful or thoughtful? Maybe someone said something that hurt your feelings. Maybe you spoke harshly back.

Find a friend or family member who will role play with you a different way of using words that would have been more skillful, helpful or effective. Why was it hard to use kinder words at the time?



This pattern is the source for Spibu's head symbol. It is an endless knot. It shows that everything is connected, and is a symbol for wisdom and interplay. Best wishes with your wise and thoughtful speech.

If you talk to someone but it doesn't seem like they're listening, instead of yelling, try whispering. The change of tone will probably catch their attention. There are times when it may be better to say nothing at all.



Web Work: Speak your Peace

Go to <http://www.cnvc.org/>, the website for the Center for Nonviolent Communication, to learn more about ways to be skillful with your speech by focusing on what you are observing, feeling, needing and requesting.

Instant Replay for Thoughtful Speech:



What questions do you have about Thoughtful Speech?

I wonder if you think the photo of teenagers talking is a good choice to represent 'Thoughtful Speech'.



What ways do you communicate besides using your words?

Which game did you like best to improve your listening?

All the world's a stage...

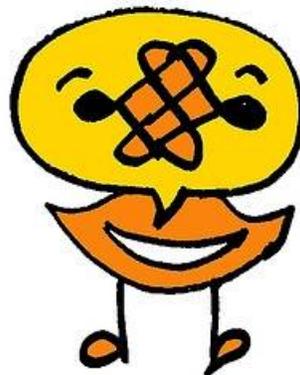
William Shakespeare

Would it be better to say, "You tested well, you're smart," or, "You tested well, you must have tried really hard" ?

If everyone could always hear what you say would it change what you say sometimes?

Which was your favorite quote in this section?

What does it mean to see the world fresh with 'haiku eyes'?



Are some words more powerful than others? Why?