

Planting Positive Words

The words you speak have the potential to build up or tear down.



Guess Who

At the bottom of the last page of this handout write your name and then list three or four descriptive words or phrases about yourself. Tear off the bottom and give it to the group leader. Once everyone has turned in their list, the leader will number them and then read each list to the group. After each list is read, write a guess as to who it is describing. After all the lists have been read, share your guesses and then answer the following question:

In what way do words have the power to paint a picture in our mind?

Project Report

The last session was about making relationships a priority. Share something you remember from that session.



The Power of Words

1. “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” Looking at this childhood statement as an adult, how do you feel about it?
2. Think about the power of words in your life. What were some statements, either positive or negative, that you heard about yourself when you were growing up that you still remember?
3. What is easier for you to recall—positive or negative words? Why?
4. Words can be compared to seeds. Negative words can cause seeds to become weeds in a person’s self esteem, while positive words bear fruit. Read the following verses and discuss what Proverbs has to say about the power of words.
 - Proverbs 11:9
 - Proverbs 12:25
 - Proverbs 15:4
 - Proverbs 16:24
 - Proverbs 24:26
 - Proverbs 25:11

After you have read these verses, discuss them as a group.

5. Of these verses, which one stood out to you and why?

The Power of Praise

Since words must be used carefully and constructively in building self-esteem, let's consider how best to speak to others.

6. Share one of the best compliments or words of encouragement you have received lately.

7. Why do you think some people find it hard to give or receive praise? Which is harder for you to do?

8. Have you praised someone else for something lately?

9. It is important to praise others for specific things. Pick someone in the group and complete the following statements. Don't worry if you can't do all of them.

- Thank you for _____
- You make me feel good when _____
- I like you because _____
- I appreciate you because _____
- I admire you because _____
- I feel confident that you can _____
- One thing you're really good at is _____

Share some of your answers with the group.

Read the following passage from Ruth:

Ruth, who was from Moab, said to Naomi, "Please let me go to the field of anyone who will be kind to me. There I will gather the grain left behind by the reapers." Naomi told her, "Go, my daughter."

So Ruth went. She entered a field and gathered the grain left behind by the reapers. Now it happened that she ended up in the part of the field that belonged to Boaz, who was from Elimelech's family.

Just then, Boaz was coming from Bethlehem, and he said to his reapers, "May the LORD be with all of you!" They answered him, "May the LORD bless you!"

Boaz asked the young man in charge of his reapers, "Who is this young woman?" The young man answered, "She's a young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. She said, 'Please let me gather grain. I will only gather among the bundles behind the reapers.' So she came here and has been on her feet from daybreak until now. She just sat down this minute in the shelter."

Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen, my daughter. Don't go in any other field to gather grain, and don't even leave this one. Stay here with my young women. Watch where my men are reaping, and follow the young women in that field. I have ordered my young men not to touch you. When you're thirsty, go to the jars and drink some of the water that the young men have drawn."

Ruth immediately bowed down to the ground and said to him, "Why are you so helpful? Why are you paying attention to me? I'm only a foreigner."

Boaz answered her, "People have told me about everything you have done for your mother-in-law after your husband died. They told me how you left your father and mother and the country where you were born. They also told me how you came to people that you didn't know before. May the LORD reward you for what you have done! May you receive a rich reward from the LORD God of Israel, under whose protection you have come for shelter."

Ruth replied, "Sir, may your kindness to me continue. You have comforted me and reassured me, and I'm not even one of your own servants."

When it was time to eat, Boaz told her, "Come here. Have some bread, and dip it into the sour wine." So she sat beside the reapers, and he handed her some roasted grain. She ate all she wanted and had some left over. When she got up to gather grain, Boaz ordered his servants, "Let her gather grain even among the bundles. Don't give her any problems. Even pull some grain out of the bundles and leave it for her to gather. Don't give her a hard time about it."

So Ruth gathered grain in the field until evening. Then she separated the grain from its husks. She had about half a bushel of barley.

Ruth 2:2-17

10. What impact did Boaz's kind actions and words have on Ruth's self-esteem?
How was Boaz affected by Ruth's kind words?

11. The pleasant exchange of words between Boaz and Ruth happened under ordinary daily circumstances as they both went about their work. How do you relate to those around you on a daily basis? Are there things you might need to change?

12. As a group, brainstorm about creative ways to build up or praise others.



As a group, see if you can come up with compliments or positive statements all the way through the alphabet. For example, start with the letter A, and come up with as many compliments you can think of with that letter such as “I admire you,” or “That’s an attractive dress.” Then go to the letter B. Try to make it through the entire alphabet.

My guess about which person is being described:

- | | |
|-----|-----|
| 1. | 11. |
| 2. | 12. |
| 3. | 13. |
| 4. | 14. |
| 5. | 15. |
| 6. | 16. |
| 7. | 17. |
| 8. | 18. |
| 9. | 19. |
| 10. | 20. |

Complete this bottom section, tear it off and hand it to the group leader.

My name is:_____

Some words or phrases that describe me: