

THE POWER OF WORDS

by Lisa Davis

Words are truly powerful things. They are something that becomes a part of us: our history and our legacy. From my own life experiences, I have understood how words – simple words said in passing to a child – can leave an impression and help manifest a future purpose.

As a writer, I know was born with words and stories of hope. When I was four, my mother let me construct words on a typewriter, always encouraging me to create more. Through the years, she gave me the words of strength, hope, and love that pushed me to become the first person on both sides of my family to graduate from college. When I was in college, my English professor, Dr. Joanne Dempsey, told me one rainy day, "One day, you will be a writer." I've kept these women's powerful words in my heart and have, in turn, tried to give words of hope and encouragement to others.

Through the years, I have tried to pass on the legacy that Dr. Dempsey, perhaps unknowingly, left for me that one rainy day. She taught me, as did my mother, that words spoken to an impressionable mind can invoke a sense of purpose that fulfills a destiny. For, indeed, all of us have a purpose. Our purpose lies like a tiny ember in our heart, stoked into brilliant flame by the kind words of a stranger, a mentor, a parent, or a friend. A teacher can tell a struggling student, "You're smart," and those words help him find the confidence to become President of the United States. A stranger can say "You're pretty" to a young girl from Mississippi and those words help her become a beloved humanitarian. A parent can say, "You're special," and those words can help his children unleash the power of potential.

Each day I give my two daughters, Dempsey and Ceiley, the words to reach forward and fulfill their purpose. I believe we are given the gift of a child and, like the wise elders of years past, we are meant to infuse them with all of our history and knowledge. The words of the past and the words of the future connect us all like links in a chain. All powerful words give hope. The mightiest words are those we share with our children. They must know the words of our ancestors for all families are linked together like a chain. Children must know the value of their particular link. They must strengthen their bond and pass on the words to their children so that future generations can grow in spirit.

But how do we do this? Children are really taking a back seat in our society. Many children are spoiled, lacking nothing, but lacking much. For what they lack are the words that would jump start their human spirit. The words that would make them tingle with an excitement to learn new things and explore their natural environment.

I have crafted many stories about human relationships, but one day I was really struck by this particular notion of purpose. My daughters and I were walking home from school when a simple brown leaf fell silently from an oak tree lining the sidewalk. No one really noticed. My kids kept walking but suddenly, for me, time stood still. It was sort of a "if a tree falls in the woods" moment. Why did the leaf fall, I wondered, and who really cared? I realized that even that leaf had a purpose, one that it may not have even realized.

We are all like the leaf. We all have a deep, profound purpose to our lives that we may not even understand until it becomes manifest. This purpose may be very simple on the surface, but deeply affect the course of many lives. We are all instrumental in each other's greater purpose. You never know when you might be the one with the words to create the next Mother Theresa or the next loving mother who nurtures and creates a wonderful child.

This leaf struck me to my core and from my notions I crafted a story of simplicity and truth. It is called A Simple Brown Leaf. It tells the story of an autumn leaf that thinks its life is over when it

falls from a tree, not realizing that it is being watched by a squirrel who plans to use it to line her nest for winter. Its main message is that every living creature has a purpose, no matter how we try to trivialize it.

I truly believe this is one of the most important messages we can give children today. Many children grow up believing that they could disappear off of the face of the Earth and no one would notice. Kids today grow up in a world of despair and lack a sense of hope. It doesn't have to be like this.

Words are powerful things. Perhaps the solution is simple. Could a child pick up a book and begin thinking about his/her life's path? Can we instill a sense of importance from a young age - a sense of knowing that "I have a place in the world?" I think all of our futures depend on finding the words within ourselves that say, "I am powerful!"

Keep in mind:

- Your words are you legacy.
- Never underestimate the power of your words.
- Sharing a story is a great way to share your words.
- Words spoken to an impressionable mind can invoke a sense of purpose that fulfills a destiny.
- The mightiest words are those we share with our children.

Now, think back on all the phrases our parents used that we swore we would never repeat. How many times have you heard your children playing, repeating for their toys the instructions you've given them? The power of words: when you repeat what is said to you, you have taken them to heart. Now you have the power.

Lisa Davis is a graduate from the University of San Diego and holds a B.A. in English and a M.Ed Counseling. She resides in San Diego with her husband and two daughters. She is the author of A Simple Brown Leaf (Abovo Publishing, ©2004). To contact Ms. Davis directly, please forward correspondence to P.O. Box 1231, Bonita, CA 91908 or email the author at feedback@ljdavis.com.

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