# Power of the Spoken Word - Stories & Illustrations

**Do you remember in the movie “Ben Hur” when Judah Ben Hur said, “I heard him say, ‘forgive them for they know not what they do,’ and his voice took the sword right out of my hand?” (Phil Barnhart, in Seasonings for Sermons , p. 74)**

**Every time you say something, your blood pressure goes up. (L. M. Boyd)**

**You know how the yawn is contagious? With some people, blushing is like that. What most quickly makes them blush, it’s said, it telling them they’re blushing. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**An emaciated beggar stopped Count Leo Tolstoy, who was out for an evening stroll. The great author, perceiving that the man was hungry, groped through his pockets for some money to give him, but found not a single cent. Tolstoy was distraught at his inability to help the man. He took the beggar's worn and dirty hands in his, lamenting, “Forgive me brother. I have nothing with me to give you.” The pale, tired face of the beggar lit up. “Oh, but you have just given me a great gift,” he smiled. “You called me brother.” (Richard & Mary-Alice Jafolla, in The Quest , p. 82)  
  
Enrico Caruso sang in Naples. Somebody hissed. That did it. He never sang in Naples again. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**During our first Healing Symposium Richard Jafolla said, “When we speak we have the largest listening audience in the world. We have 100 trillion cells. These cells are awake inside of us. They are saying, ‘Okay, what do you want me to do today?’ And we tell them. If we tell them we want them to regenerate and go ahead with their healing, they do it. It will be as you desire.” (Christopher Ian Chenoweth)  
Those who understand children surely have discovered that if you continually call a child “bad” he will have a hard time being good. But if you encourage the best in him by speaking of his good qualities he will begin to believe in his goodness and grow toward righteousness. (A Synoptic Study of the Teachings of Unity, p. 22)Walking into a noisy classroom the instructor slapped a hand on the desk and ordered sharply: “I demand pandemonium!” The class quieted down immediately. “It isn't what you demand,” explained the instructor, “but the way you demand it.” (Bits & Pieces)  
When Dr. Mihai Dimancescu was a resident at a Connecticut hospital, he made rounds one morning with the chief of neurosurgery. They came to a 24-year-old woman who had been in a coma for three months. “Don't waste time on her,” the chief instructed. “She's never going to wake up.” A few weeks later the woman regained consciousness. When Dimancescu asked if she could remember anything that occurred while she was in the coma, she said: “I remember hearing that doctor say I'd never get well. I made up my mind to show him he was wrong.” “The woman decided to fight for her life, and she won,” said Dimancescu, who is now at the South Nassau Communities Hospital in Oceanside, N. Y. “I've seen it happen again and again.” (Donald Robinson, in Reader's Digest)**

**A Boston man who drank himself into a coma had a miraculous recovery when his boss ordered him to get out of bed. Bill Dipasquale, a waiter, went on a bender two months ago and landed on life support in the hospital. Doctors told his family he would never recover. But when DiPasquale’s boss heard about his condition, he said, “You tell him to wake up, get out of bed, and get back to work!” A friend witnessed the message into DiPasquale’s ear, and five minutes later, the comatose man’s eyes suddenly opened, “I’ve got to get to work,” he said. He’s made a full recovery. (The Week magazine, January 14, 2005)**

**Never underestimate the power of words. In 1896 an obscure congressman from Nebraska attended the Democratic National Convention as an alternate delegate. He was only 36 years old. Yet he made a speech that was so powerful that the convention ended by nominating him as its candidate for President of the United States. The name was William Jennings Bryan. (Bits & Pieces)**

**When man points his mind toward God and allows his zeal to run in a single channel, he may become God-intoxicated. Peter the Hermit became intoxicated with the idea that God wanted Jerusalem rescued from Moslem rule, and he rode up and down Europe on his little mule shouting, “God wills it.” His fanatical zeal started the Crusades that rolled from Europe to Palestine for nearly two hundred years. (Charles Fillmore, in Atom-Smashing Power of Mind)**

**I recall a minister who had been experiencing long bouts of depression because of the seeming lack of success in his parish. One day he went to visit a woman who was very ill. As he started to leave the room, the woman spoke to him: “You have been such an important person in my life. I want you to know that I have great love for you.” These kind words sailed straight into the minister’s heart. He told me that he just couldn’t believe it but by the time he reached his office he could sense that something different was stirring within him. During the next several weeks the depression lifted and he felt a tremendous rejuvenation in his life. (Joyce Rupp, in Little Pieces of Light)  
  
 When he was 16, Neil Diamond recalls, his father introduced him to a successful salesman. “The man asked me, ‘What is it you really want to do?’ As a joke, I said, ‘I want to be a rock ‘n’ roll singer.’ It was the first time I ever said it out loud.” (Claire Carter, in Parade magazine)**

**Members of the English Parliament hissed Benjamin Disraeli as he stood, for the first time, to address them. They laughed when he said, “Though I sit down now, the time will come when you will hear of me.” And hear of him they did. Benjamin Disraeli went on to become a noted British statesman. (Glenn Van Ekeren, in The Speaker's Sourcebook , p. 150)**

**A lecturer to doctors urges each to listen carefully to the patient, then convey three messages: “I believe in you. I trust you. I know you can handle this thing.” *(L. M. Boyd)***

**I caught my 3-year-old nephew tasting the food intended for our dog “Cubby.” I jokingly told him if he didn’t stop eating dog food, he’d turn into a dog. He ran outside to play, but came back into the house a little while later and asked very seriously, “How old was Cubby when she turned into a dog?” You’ve really got to watch what you say. *(Barbara Gass, in Country magazine)***

**"I finally realized I eat too much fast food,” Pete told his friend Joe. “What changed your mind?” Joe asked. “My nephew,” Pete said. “When my sister told him I was coming to visit, he asked, ‘Is that my uncle from Florida or my uncle from McDonald’s?’” (Rocky Mountain News)**

**During one of the last major offensives of World War II, Dwight Eisenhower was walking near the Rhine and came upon a GI who seemed depressed. “How are you feeling, son?” he asked. “General,” the young man replied, “I'm awful nervous.” “Well,” Eisenhower said, “you and I are a good pair then, because I'm nervous too. Maybe if we just walk along together, we'll be good for each other.” No sermon. No special advice. But what words of encouragement. (Mark R. Littleton, in Reader's Digest)**

**Fears thrive on secrecy and a sense of being “very special.” In 1968, Professor Irving Janis, a psychologist at Yale University, studied a group of surgical patients. Some worried out loud before surgery; others expressed little apprehension, indeed seemed to exhibit confidence. Curiously, the first group experienced fewer post-operative complications and had an easier convalescence than those stoic patients who felt they had to bear their fears by themselves. (Daniel A. Sugarman, in Reader’s Digest)  
  
 In 1848 James Marshall, who was building a sawmill on California’s American River, noticed a glimmer in the water. “By god, boys, I think I found a gold mine,” he told his fellow workers.  When word got out, the Great Gold Rush was on. *(Joseph A. Harriss, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Mark Twain (pseudonym of Samuel Langhorne Clemens) was born November 30, 1835, the year Haley’s Comet passed over the earth. He vowed he would not die until he saw the famous comet for himself; he died the day after it passed over the earth in 1910. *(Harry Bright & Harlan Briscoe, in So, Now You Know, p. 175)***

**Dr. C. Norman Shealy also told the story of a man who endured dreadful headaches for twenty-six years. For the last two years of that time, his headaches were an everyday occurrence. In the years since he began to pray and talk positively to his body, he has not experienced a single headache. (Christopher Ian Chenoweth, in Unity magazine)**

**In the early 1900s, Adolf Hitler regularly had lessons in mass psychology and speaking under the tutorship of a man named Erik Jan Hanussen, one of the most renowned seers and astrologers in Europe. He taught Hitler the tricks of elocution and use of body language. (Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts, p. 82)  
  
What gives the spoken word its power? What is the mystery of Jesus’ eloquence? Certainly it was not in his choice of word, or his delightful parables, or the grace of his speech, the charm of his voice, or his oratory. In all these he was surpassed by a Lincoln, a Webster, a Patrick Henry. The mystery of Jesus’ spoken word was a combination of all these and then something divinely more. And to these qualities the indisputable fact that he was what he said. In him the word became flesh and dwelt among men. He was the word he spoke. (Raymond Holliwell, in I.N.T.A. magazine)  
Lyndon B. Johnson, who became a U. S. Senator and President, was born on August 27, 1908, and on that day his grandfather rode his horse around Stonewall, Texas, shouting: “A United States Senator has been born today!” (Ripley's Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 320)**

**Through his spoken word, man is continually making laws for himself. I knew a man who said, “I always miss a car. It invariably pulls out just as I arrive.” His daughter said, “I always catch a car. It's sure to come just as I get there.” This occurred for years. Each had made a separate law for himself, one of failure, one of success. This is the psychology of superstitions. (Florence Scovel Shinn, in The Game of Life , p. 22)**

**All forms of life really love to hear the truth about themselves, which is that they are radiant expressions of the eternal God. Even the cells of our bodies respond and regenerate when they are told that they are appreciated and loved. (Richard & Mary-Alice Jafolla, in The Quest , p. 324)  
Didn’t Abraham Lincoln fight a broadsword duel with the Illinois state auditor, James Shields? Almost. Lincoln’s future wife, Mary Todd, had a hand in writing a newspaper letter critical of Shields. Lincoln was dragged into it. He and Shields met to fight, but talked each other out of it and became lifelong friends. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Abraham Lincoln attributed his excellent memory to a lifelong habit of reading out loud. “When I read aloud two senses catch the idea: first, I see what I read; second, I hear it, and therefore I can remember it better.” (Bits & Pieces)**

**A NASA official at Kennedy Space Center was explaining to a reporter how a module carrying human beings will be landed on Mars. The reporter asked how the module will return to earth. “That involves a highly complex plan,” the space agency representative said. “It begins with the words, ‘Our Father, who art in heaven.’” *(Delia Sellers, in Abundant Living magazine)***

**Bette Davis told an interesting story of how the “Oscar” got its name. “I received my prized Academy Award statuette at about the same time that I finally wheedled out of my husband, Harmon O. Nelson, Jr., the tenaciously guarded secret of his middle name. It was ‘Oscar.’ To tease him, I began to call my statuette ‘Oscar.’ Soon ‘Oscar’ was adopted by the industry -- and that is how the Academy Award statuettes got their nickname.” (Bits & Pieces)**

**At the age of 30 Cezanne was the most thoroughly rejected painter in Paris. Nobody liked his all-too-original work. To salve his bruised ego, he bought a parrot. So, as he painted all day in his studio, he managed to keep up his confidence. The parrot kept repeating: “Cezanne is a great artist! Cezanne is a great artist!” That parrot was smarter than the critics. *(Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 215)***

**Have faith in the power of your mind to penetrate and release the energy that is pent up in the atoms of your body, and you will be astounded at the response. Paralyzed functions anywhere in the body can be restored to action by one's speaking to the spiritual intelligence and life within them. Jesus raised His dead bodies in this way, and Paul says that we can raise our body in the same manner if we have the same spiritual contact. (Charles Fillmore, in Atom-Smashing Power of Mind , p. 11)**

**Pedestal words raise the other person to a level above the ordinary, surely a plus for just about everyone. “May?” Asking permission implies authority. “As you probably know.” Implies vast knowledge. “I'd like your advice.” Suggests superior wisdom. “I'd sure appreciate it if.” There is an implication here that he or she has the power to refuse or grant. “You're right.” A pat on the back. “Spare time from your busy day.” Implies he or she is a busy and therefore important person. “Because of your knowledge.” Implies skill, professionalism. “A person of your standing.” No one knows just what standing means but everyone believes -- or hopes -- he or she has it. “I'd like your opinion.” People on pedestals are supposed to have opinions, so if an opinion is asked, the person must be up there somewhere. “Please.” A great lubricator in human relations. Pedestal words. Smart people use them. (Bits & Pieces)**

**When William M. Jeffers was made head of the Union Pacific Railroad he became so engrossed in his job that he forgot the human quality he so abundantly had. An old-time locomotive engineer came to him one day with an idea about brake adjustments on some new equipment. But Jeffers' casual answers indicated preoccupation with other problems. The old engineer looked at him for a moment, then started for the door and said, “Bill, don't ever get so damned busy that you haven't time to think.” Startled, Jeffers called him back and said, “Jim, I'm much obliged to you. You've told me something I ought to know. Thanks, I won't.” After that he redoubled his efforts to keep his door open to employees with criticisms and suggestions. (Bits & Pieces)  
How would you feel if the private conversations you carry on in your head were to suddenly be broadcast over a public address system? It would be quite revealing, wouldn't it? And yet, spiritually, that is exactly what happens. Though others may not actually HEAR the words we say to ourselves, and though we may think that because we have kept it to ourselves no one will ever know what we are actually saying to ourselves. The effects of those words cannot be hidden. (Wendy S. Craig)  
Radio is opening up a new field of activity in the use of the spoken word. If the spoken word can be mechanically intensified a hundred million times, how much greater will be its power when energized by Spirit! (Charles Fillmore)**

**You were taught to read without moving your lips, were you not? One school of thought suspects that may be a mistake. Lab tests show you remember better what you read aloud. Pronouncing words tends to make them stick in your memory. (L. M. Boyd)**

**“It’s the single most important thing parents can do to help their kids read,” says Korn. Start as early as possible. Studies have shown the soothing sound of a parent’s voice can calm fussy babies and entertain quiet ones. And reading together fosters a special closeness. *(Margery D. Rosen, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Former President Reagan will receive $1,000 a minute for a one-hour talk to owners of Hardee’s franchises meeting in Orlando. Florida, next month. (Rocky Mountain News, January 27, 1990)**

**My earliest recollection of drawing and being complimented on it is from kindergarten. I think it was my first day, and the teacher gave us large sheets of white paper, large black crayons, and told us to draw a man shoveling snow, and she came around during the project, looked at my picture, and said, “Someday, Charles, you’re going to be an artist.” *(Charles M. Schulz, in Peanuts: A Golden Celebration)***

**Participation also means community. Isolation is crippling; sharing is healthful. In the case of David Spiegel’s research, the only thing his patients did differently from other cancer patients was talk. And that sharing created changes that led to positive results for their health. Spiegel cites numerous studies showing that people with many social ties live longer than those who aren't connected to other human beings. Married cancer patients survive longer than unmarried patients. Why? They share. (Bill Moyers, in USA Weekend)**

**Gunther Gebel-Williams can command 18 tigers at once and direct a herd of 32 elephants by his voice alone. He has trained horses, leopards, pumas, zebras, even a giraffe. He is a phenomenally gifted trainer who has been seen and applauded by over 100 million people and has almost singlehandedly changed the way Americans think about wild-animal ci5rcus acts. (John Culhane, in Reader's Digest)**

**Singer Frankie Valli was hypnotized as a kid when he saw Frank Sinatra sing at the Paramount in New Tork. “Someday I’m going to be up there too,” he said. Valli made it just in time, playing the Paramount years later, just before it was torn down. *(Bob Fenster, They Did What!?, p. 29)***

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