



## THE WORD IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD

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We use language to transmit ideas and thoughts to each other. We use it to inform, ask questions, influence or effect changes. Language is what we use to write books and stories and verses. We also no longer look at language as a mere function or privilege of the human race. Animal trainers have already taught animals under their care to respond to simple commands. Pet birds have even been taught to mimic human language and human expressions.

Fortunately, we humans have been able to reserve language as an exclusive ability that sets us apart from lower beings or creatures. No matter how studies have revealed that certain animals like whales and dolphins emit sounds to communicate with one another, it is still us humans that have used language to the hilt by creating not just sounds and symbols but entire language systems to articulate our thoughts.

We have created computer programs using technological “languages” to make them more advanced. Our cellular phones respond to our voices and dial numbers or perform operations at our command. We have been able to create clapper activated on/off switches for automated lighting systems. We zoom in and out of computer images using our thumbs and fingers to manipulate those images. We have click-to-call and click – to-map functionalities for our websites. Yes, as far as language is concerned, mankind has gone a long way. Yet, amidst all the advances we have gone through to make communicating easier in our day-to-day existence, how much of language has suffered in order to make our interactions quicker and more “efficient”?

Have you ever heard of speed dating? The phenomenon has spread like wildfire in many societies. Participants converse with each other for less than 10 minutes and then move on to another dating partner. One gets to meet several different people in a day and talk to each one of them, albeit briefly. This is quite an amusing way to meet multiple dating partners in one speed dating session. People have testified that it’s a more effective way to meet new people than going to bars or clubs. But what can you really know about a person you only spend less than 10 minutes with? Married people know that it takes a lifetime to get to know just one person thoroughly so talking with someone for less than ten minutes can be a challenge to the mind as well as the heart. I guess people who join such events just rely on the unexpressed language of smell and sight to be able to land a great partner. Will such language really suffice in the long term?

In our daily interactions, let us not forget how essential the things we express are as well as those that are left unexpressed. Let us use language well for it can spell the difference between a happy life and one that’s just mere existence.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. How can language influence the way we live? Be as specific as necessary.
2. How is language utilized to change the world? Cite specific examples.
3. Do you think it is useful to also learn alternative forms of communication such as sign language or Morse code or Braille? Justify your answer.
4. What do you think would happen if animals could also talk?
5. How do you use language in your day-to-day interactions?