



Minnesota Women of Today

Leadership Toolbox – The Power of Our Words Activity

We all have room for personal growth, from the most experienced member to the guest walking in the door for the first time. This training is a simple and fun way to remind ourselves that our words have power. Even when we are 100% right, the way we say something can make us 1000% wrong. This 15 minute activity was created to support chapter's with internal conflicts, difficulty finding volunteers, and members stepping up to take on positions. It all starts somewhere and where you find disengaged members, you almost always find negativity and lack of respect for other's ideas. How many times must a member hear "no" or "that is not the way we do that" before they stop helping. It takes time to turn things around and rebuild trust. It all starts with listening and engaging positively with others.



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Introduction

Before starting you will need three copies of the skits on pages 3 and 4. To simplify the presentation, a facilitator's script can be found on page 2. It will walk you through the introduction, asking for volunteers, facilitating the discussion, and a closing. Take time to read through everything before starting this activity.

You may find many members react poorly to change. On the outside they appear confident. They know how to be supportive and open to others. Then the minute someone wants to do something new or change an existing idea they overreach and shut down a conversation before it starts. To help a member through the process of change you must first understand the emotions they may be experiencing; is it fear, relief, excitement or something else? Create an honest, positive, and compelling description for the changes you want to make before any anxiety, confusion or rumor take root. Allow others to share concerns in a constructive way. Remind them changing something does not devalue the efforts made in the past and does not take away from their accomplishments. Most important, as a leader, your words matter. When in a situation where a conflict of ideas becomes negative, you have the ability to pause a conversation, ask the person stating the negative comments why, and/or move past the negativity to support the positive.

If at any time during the year you feel your chapter needs more support, please reach out to the Chapter Management Vice President (CMVP) for help at cmvp@mnwt.org.

Faciliator's Script

(Introduction)

I need three members to play the roles in two very short scripted skits.

Thank you. Let's have a round of applause for our volunteers today. Today they will be performing a series of short skits to help us refocus on the power of our words. As members of {your chapter} Women of Today we have amazing potential to not only reach out into our community and make a difference, but also make a difference in our own lives and those who surround us. And now for the show.

(Volunteers Perform Both Skits)

{Thank performers}

Before we start our discussion, I want to remind you all that constructive criticism adds to learning, while pointing fingers adds to frustration.

(Select Questions from below to facilitate a 5 - 10 minute discussion)

- Are we accepting and encouraging?
- Are we willing to listen to other's ideas even if they are not the same as ours?
- Do we feel heard and included?
- How do we look to outsiders looking in?
- What can we do better/different?

(End Discussion)

Thank you all for your input. Your thoughts matter. To avoid taking up more than our allotted time, I am going to stop our discussion here.

(Closing)

Our words have power. Even when we are 100% right, the way we say something can make us 1000% wrong. From the most experienced member to the guest walking in the door for the first time we all have room for personal growth. We all should have the opportunity and support from fellow members to try not only new things, but change current things and even bring back and update things that didn't work perfect in the past. Ideas bring new life and enthusiasm to our chapter. The way we approach and respond to a situation can make the difference in the way our chapter functions and feels. I hope we all end this day a little more humble and a little more inspired that we are an amazing group of women who have the power to do amazing things.

The Power of Our Words Skits

SKIT #1:

- Member #1: (excited, looking towards the audience) I have an idea for a new project. I would like to chair a Winter Supplies for Students fundraiser. I'm thinking a good date would be the third Saturday of August and we would only need a minimal number of members to...
- Member #2: (interrupting member #1) I don't think that will work. We don't even have members willing to chair the Kids Bingo Event and now you want to add something more to the calendar.
- Member #3: (a little rude, talking directly to Member #1) We don't even do those types of events. Why do you want to do this project? And why August if it's a winter thing?
- Member #1: (talking to the audience with Member #2 and Member #3 quietly talking in the background the entire time) I'm friends with the school's secretary and she was talking about how there is an increase of children coming to school in the fall and winter without socks, hats, and mittens....
- Member #3: (interrupting member #1) I just don't see how this can work. We've never done this before. We could end up with nothing and it would be a waste of our time.
- Member #2: I can't help with this, I'm on vacation that week; plus we need to focus on getting a chair for the Kids Bingo Event instead. We've been doing that for years and it needs to be done first.
- Member #1: (looking towards the audience) I'm not having fun anymore. I think it's time to move on to the second skit.

{Shake it off. Turn in a circle. Start skit #2}

SKIT #2:

- Member #1: (excited, looking towards the audience) I have an idea for a new project. I would like to chair a Winter Supplies for Students fundraiser. I'm thinking a good date would be the third Saturday of August and we would only need a minimal number of members to be there, but of course more members volunteering would make the event easier to manage and more fun.
- Member #2: (smiling and looking at member #1) We've never done an event like this before, but I'm open to the idea. My first thought is we don't have a chair for the Kids Bingo event we do every year the fourth week in August. Is this something that could replace that or possibly incorporate the family participation aspect that event has?
- Member #3: (Looking at member #2) Nice idea. (Turns to member #1 in a kind voice) I'm not seeing the full picture; can you help me understand where the idea came from and why August?
- Member #1: (speaking to the audience, all other members are quiet and looking at Member #1) I'm friends with the school's secretary and she was talking about how there is an increase of children coming to school in the fall and winter without socks, hats, and mittens. She went on to say how much they appreciate the school supply donations but wish there was a way to collect other items before it started to get cold. Plus, many teachers use their own money to buy these items for students. That's when I had the idea for the Winter Supplies for Students fundraiser. We could raise the funds now for the school so they could purchase needed items before it gets cold.
- Member #2: (looking at Member #1) You may not get the results you are hoping for, but if you are willing to take the risk, you have my support.
- Member #3: I have concerns about the timing, a lot of us are busy that week. Would you be willing to consider a different week or are there things we could help you with ahead of time?
- Member #2: I really love the way the Kids Bingo Event included families. Is there is a way we can add that sense of involvement to this new project? It would make the change a lot easier for some of us old school members.
- Member #1: I'm getting excited about this. (Looking at Member #2) would you be willing to work with me to come up with a final proposal that includes a little old with the new? (Looking at the audience) And with that I think we need to move this conversation offline and pass it back over to our presenter.