

# School Counsellor Newsletter



## The Power of our Words

Edition Twenty-six

I am sure we can all remember a time when a seemingly casual comment was made by our parents, family or friends but it has had a long lasting impact on us - and not always in a positive way. For example, telling a boy he shouldn't wear pink or saying to a girl they can't play rugby. Addressing these things, can seem for many of us, that society has become too politically correct but the reality is our current society has also become a great deal more accepting and understanding, which is undoubtedly a positive thing.

Our children often copy what we say without always realising the intent of what is said. Being mindful of the example we set, and the need to make changes to comments that may have become second nature to us when we were younger, will mean that we use our words powerfully and positively. I hope these examples below provide you with something to think about in terms of the power of our words and the importance of making changes if required.

### Good and Bad

As a parent we might often say "you are so good at reading" or our son might say "I am bad at writing", when there can be little merit in thinking of ourselves as good or bad at something. It is more helpful to acknowledge effort or behaviours associated with learning. For example as a parent you could say, "I really

like the effort you put into your reading so that you can improve your understanding". Or you could encourage your son by saying "I know you find writing challenging and I love how you persevere when you find it hard."

Similarly, it is often easy as a parent to say "that isn't good for you" or "that is bad for you" and so on. In doing so, no matter how well intentioned we are, it can create the impression that there are bad things and good things, with no area in between.

A better approach could be to encourage things in moderation. If we use our diet for example, rather than saying that ice cream is bad for you, it can be a better approach to say that ice cream is a 'sometimes' rather than an 'all the time' food. Similarly, rather than saying chips will make you fat for example, you could talk about the fact that chips are a treat food that are okay to eat every now and then. Another way to approach talking about your son's diet is to use the food pyramid concept, reinforcing that all foods play a part in our diet but we need to eat more of some than others, to keep our diet balanced and healthy.

If you would like further information on how to support your, or your son's, diet, and conversations about this, the following link may be of use: [Ministry of Health](#)

### [Run like a girl](#)

If you have not seen this video I encourage you to watch it. It is just over three minutes long and is certainly thought provoking. It highlights the potential damage that can be done with a comment like this. Whilst the video focuses on the impact on girls, the comment can be just as destructive for boys. It is wonderful to see in the video that the younger girls, when asked to 'run like a girl' simply run as they normally would because they are yet to understand the negative connotations this comment can have. Or perhaps they have grown up in a community where the power of these words is understood and challenged positively.



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**Jenelle is a Registered Provisional Member with NZAC (New Zealand Association of Counsellors).**

If you wish to discuss the services the school counsellor can provide please see your son's homeroom teacher or Amos Pilgrim [amos.pilgrim@medbury.school.nz](mailto:amos.pilgrim@medbury.school.nz).