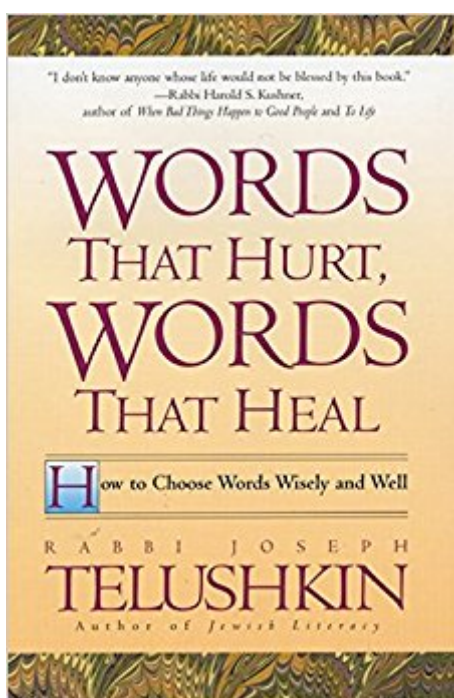


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# Words That Hurt, Words That Heal: How To Choose Words Wisely And Well



## Synopsis

Joseph Telushkin is renowned for his warmth, his erudition, and his richly anecdotal insights, and in *Words That Hurt, Words That Heal* he focuses these gifts on the words we use in public and in private, revealing their tremendous power to shape relationships. With wit and wide-ranging intelligence, Rabbi Telushkin explains the harm in spreading gossip, rumors, or others' secrets, and how unfair anger, excessive criticism, or lying undermines true communication. By sensitizing us to subtleties of speech we may never have considered before, he shows us how to turn every exchange into an opportunity. Remarkable for its clarity and practicality, *Words That Hurt, Words That Heal* illuminates the powerful effects we create by what we say and how we say it.

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## Customer Reviews

Contrary to the nursery rhyme, words can hurt as much as sticks and stones. In this wise book, Rabbi Telushkin (Jewish Wisdom) draws on Jewish teachings, primarily the Talmud, and traditional Jewish stories to explore how our words can harm others and how we can approach the act of speaking in a more ethical, even sacred, manner. Acting on the principle that self-awareness is the initial step toward transformation, Telushkin first brings gossip, lying and angry words into the light, and then prescribes possible remedies for these so often unconscious habits of expression. Wit informs his text, as does a courageous intelligence—for instance, in his defending, against recent conventional and media wisdom, the right of public figures "to keep their private lives private." Telushkin concludes with a proposal for a national "Speak No Evil Day," which, if acted upon, he says, can offer "a taste of heaven on earth." Author tour. Copyright 1996 Reed Business

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For religious communities, the power of human language to inspire, educate, and unite individuals has a long, valued tradition. Rabbi Telushkin (Jewish Wisdom, LJ 9/1/94) suggests that we need look no further than the Book of Genesis in order to comprehend the true power of our spoken language. Conversely, and more to Telushkin's purpose here, the ways in which we use language in our everyday lives is often harmful and destructive. He argues that if a person cannot go for more than 24 hours without saying any unkind words about or to anyone, then that person has lost control of his tongue. In the first half of the book, Telushkin uses biblical passages, religious parables, and personal anecdotes to illustrate how language is too commonly used for negative purposes?gossip, unfair criticism, and lying, for example. The remaining chapters cover the ways in which language can be used to create positive, healthy relationships and environments. To his credit, the author's use of religious stories and examples is executed in an even-handed, nonpreachy manner, and the moral framework by which he constructs his arguments appeals to a common sense of humanity and decency. Although all of his points have been made before, it is worth hearing them again. For public libraries.?David R. Johnson, Fayetteville P.L., Ark.Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I really liked this book. It speaks to a problem all around each of us regardless of our faith background. The author gives such clear examples of how our words can hurt or even destroy others. I certainly saw myself in many of the negative examples but I also realized how true what Telushkin says is evident in daily life around us. I could not help recall a saying of my mother from years ago:" If you can't say something good, don't say anything at all". This is what Telushkin is saying as well. But he goes beyond not saying anything at all and suggests ways to change what and how we speak to and of others. He supports his philosophy with Jewish teachings and biblical sayings which makes the ideas more powerful. Some stories he tells are sad while others are funny. But all spoke to me about being more careful how I use my words. This was an enjoyable read no matter what your faith. I know anyone who reads this book will think more carefully before speaking again!

I loved this book and have loved other books by this author. It was very thought provoking and provided powerful biblical concepts. The only reason I rated it 4 rather than 5 stars is that there were a few instances when stories/comments were shared that were unflattering to someone mentioned

in the story telling. I understand that perhaps this was necessary to make a point, and that in most, if not all instances, the stories/comments shared were regarding historical instances that were public knowledge, or in the news, or regarding public figures, but I was not familiar with every case cited, and so it seemed that this was in some way conflicting with the message of not sharing negative/harmful information about an individual unless one would have a direct need to know this information - especially since it gave me a negative view of those who spoke words that were harmful, even if for a few moments - remembering that we are all human. Other than this small issue - I think this book is one I will read and re-read because the information is so powerful and will help me and anyone who reads to speak carefully - life affirming words. I am grateful for the author's insight and wisdom.

Very few of us think before we speak, and Rabbi Telushkin limns the consequences in this compelling volume. The old adage about sticks and stones aside, words DO hurt. They may not make us bleed physically, but their damage is real and can be lasting. Unfortunately, we live in a society that values winning above all else. Political candidates smear each other on the campaign trail, the rich and famous publish tell-all biographies to get back at family and ex-lovers, and when we feel like we're losing an argument, we cripple our opponents by criticizing them, not the behaviour that offended us. ("You're a liar" vs. "I don't think you're telling the truth.") The end result can be a ruptured family, traumatized child, or destroyed reputation, not to mention the erosion of one's own status as an ethical being. Being a rabbi, Telushkin liberally underscores his points with Jewish-themed anecdotes and rabbinical commentary, but the lessons imparted are invaluable to people of all colors and creeds. I've been guilty of a lot of the behaviours that he cautions us against, and this book has inspired me to try being a better person. Words have the power to make or break our personal and professional relationships. "Words That Hurt, Words That Heal" is a wakeup call that warns us to use the gift of speech wisely and benignly.

Wow .... Everyone needs to read this. I wish I had read it when I was younger it would have save me some of the grief I have had over saying things that I wish I could take back. It is an easy read and very thought provoking. I am mentoring a young woman and we are going to go through this book together after we finish the one we are on now. I find since reading the book, I concentrate more on listening and less about talking. Anytime I hear myself say "Well, I think .... blah blah blah" I ask myself what credentials do I have to think anything about the situation? AND has anyone asked me what I think? If so then I can share. This is working so much better for my relationship with my

grown daughters. So please go ahead and ask me what I think! Oh, since you ask .... I think you should buy this book

I had read this book about 10 years ago, but did not remember the author or title. I ordered it hoping it would be the same book, and to my delight, it was! The chapter on "gossiping" offers the reasons people engage in that hurtful act, and totally nails it. Everything in it seems to be written with an unusual amount of wisdom, and not only does the author explain what to say, but how and when to say it, if at all. The examples he gives make his teachings crystal clear so that you can remember many of them. Scriptural references are given when possible.

An amazing book. Helpful guidelines for communicating kindly and justly. When to speak up, when to refrain - when you're feeling eager to correct someone, don't; when you feel you should, but can't figure out how to say it, that is the time to gently move forward. It is a kindness to refrain from preaching a piece of wisdom that you know the other person cannot hear. Of course, the author is far more articulate and thorough in his writing. This is a book that has proven helpful in restoring and maintaining difficult relationships. I have given this book to friends several times and always bought a replacement for my own shelf.

I am greatly impressed and encouraged with this work. Rabbi Joseph Telushkin has written a compassionate and thought provoking book to encourage all of us to become aware of the power that is in our tongues for good or evil. Although the principle of lashon ha-ra is not a new idea, Rabbi Telushkin like the Chofetz Chaim teaches us to use our words as tools to build better lives and a better world for G-d. It is my hope that everyone will read and follow this important work.

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