

Think!

Presented by Mary Lowman

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Day One

My professional career began with IBM, and they had a motto then which was conspicuously displayed all around the offices. It was one simple word: "Think." Just "Think."

I remember wondering why they would choose such a motto for the company. Doesn't everybody think, I thought. Now I understand the importance of that simple one-word motto, because often we just don't think enough. For example, how frequently are we engaging our mouths, saying things without thinking? And that usually ends up causing all kinds of trouble.

A friend once told me her teenage daughter and she had agreed to each wear a bracelet that says think, as a way to remind them to think before they speak. I got to thinking about that and decided it was a good idea. We have some bracelets for you, our listeners, that say think, to remind you to think about what you're going to say before you say it. This could have dramatic positive results for all your relationships.

Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips (Psalm 141:3).

Perhaps wearing a bracelet that says think will help us to set guards over our mouths, so we think about what we say before we say it.

I want to give you an acrostic of the word think, to help you determine whether you should say what you are starting to say or not. We start with:

T stands for true: Is it true? Do you know for certain what you are just about to say is true? If not, don't say it.

If we think before we speak and determine we're not sure what we're about to say is true, this will eliminate most gossip. Gossip is usually something we've heard but don't really know for sure, but we freely pass it on. After all, it's juicy and we just want to tell somebody that juicy tidbit. But if we start to think before we speak, and ask ourselves, "Is this true?" we'll go a long way to eliminating gossipy talk, and that's a very good thing.

Day Two

The Bible says the tongue has the power of life and death. When we speak before we think, we often use our tongue as a death weapon. I'm encouraging you to think before you speak, and we've even made some bracelets for you to wear which say think. It's a good reminder to carry with you all day, so before you speak you make certain what you say needs to be said and is said in the best possible way.

This acrostic for think will help you think before you speak. We already saw T stands for true. Speak only what you know to be true.

H stands for helpful: Are the words you're just getting ready to say going to help anyone? If not, don't say them.

Ephesians 4:29 is one of the most powerful verses in the Bible, in my opinion, and if we practiced it, we would think before we speak. It says,

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen (Ephesians 4:29).

Some time ago I began praying this verse into my life, and I encourage you to do the same. Then I noticed when I would start to say something, I would often hear that inaudible voice of God's Spirit saying, "Is this going to help anyone else; will it benefit those who listen?" That has caused me to stop in the middle of lots of sentences, as I realized I didn't need to say what I was planning to say because it wasn't helpful to anyone else.

Can you even imagine the wonderful changes that would take place on our jobs, in our churches, and in our homes if we determined not to speak any words that were unwholesome, that did not benefit others? That would eliminate griping and complaining; it would keep us from nagging people; it would cause us to stop passing on gossip. My goodness, it would make a difference in the way we live.

Think about what you're going to say before you say it. It's so much easier to swallow those unhelpful words than it is to try to recover from them once they are said. If it's not helpful, just don't say it.

Day Three

Have you inspired anyone lately? You may not think about it in those terms, but each day we have opportunities to inspire people. To inspire them to be kind, to inspire them to be encouraged—and on and on. And usually that inspiration comes through the words we speak.

We're talking about how to think before we speak, so when we speak, we say the right things in the right way. And to help you think before you speak, we have some wristbands that say, "Think." We'll be glad to send you one of these to help you remember to think before you speak. The Bible has lots to say about guarding our words carefully, and this wristband reminder may help you do that.

We're looking at an acrostic of the word think, which can help us determine whether we should say what we're just getting ready to say. T means true, make sure it's true. H means helpful, make sure it will benefit those who listen. And now:

I is for inspiring: Will your words inspire the person who hears them in some way, even if it's very small? If not, maybe you don't need to say them.

Now I need to make it clear I'm talking about inspiring someone for good purposes, because it's possible to inspire someone to do something wrong. But how wonderful it is when someone speaks inspiring words to us. I remember a day when I particularly needed some encouragement, out of the clear blue a friend simply said something that inspired me. It gave me the encouragement I needed at that moment to keep on keepin' on, as we say.

I often try to remember to say anything nice I think, whether it's a compliment on someone's outfit or a word of appreciation for their help. If you're thinking something nice about someone, then why not express it in words and then you speak words of inspiration. If we think before we speak, we will not only be careful not to say things we should not say, but it will remind us to say those inspiring things that we often think but don't say.

Remember, your words have power; use that power wisely to inspire others. They will come back to you in a wonderful way.

Day Four

Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body (Proverbs 16:24).

If we all made it a daily practice to think before we speak, our words would be more gracious, and gracious words have power to bring peace in stressful situations and healing to our bodies, because stress is reduced by gracious words.

To help us prevent words coming out before we think about them, we are offering a simple wristband that says think. My hope is by wearing this wristband, you will be reminded to pay attention to what you are getting ready to say and make sure it is appropriate. And we're using an acronym of the word think to help us evaluate our words.

T is for true; speak only what is true. H is for helpful; make sure your words will benefit those you speak to. I means speak inspiring words that will encourage others. And now:

N is for necessary: Speak only what is necessary. In other words, don't talk too much.

Sin is not ended by multiplying words, but the prudent hold their tongues (Proverbs 10:19).

But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned (Matthew 12:36-37).

Talking too much can be a real problem. They tell us that women talk more than men, and if that is true, we women need to be doubly careful about how much we say. We don't need to fill empty spaces with empty words. Silence can indeed be golden, and for those of us who are talkers, we need to take seriously this exhortation to speak only what is necessary.

I think we're all aware that a person who talks too much is not a person we particularly enjoy being with. Listening to others is the skill we want to develop, so we give others the respect of listening to them instead of inflicting our unnecessary words on anyone who happens to be near. Before you speak, think "Is it necessary?" You'll probably say fewer words!

Day Five

No doubt you've heard the cliché, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." Contrary to that little couplet, words can indeed hurt and they can hurt deeply. And you know, once words are spoken, they can never be unspoken. One of the most Christ-like things we can do is to think before we speak so our words don't hurt others.

I've been encouraging all of us to make it a habit to think before we speak, and to help us remember to do that, we're offering you a bracelet which simply says think. By wearing it, it is my hope we will all get better at thinking about what we're going to say before we say it.

Using the acronym of think, we've seen our words should be T – true, H - helpful, I – inspiring, N – necessary, and finally:

K stands for kind: We need to think about how we can say what we have to say in a kind way.

How many times have words been spoken to you in an unkind manner, and while the message itself was not necessarily a problem, the words or the tone of voice used to send the message were very hurtful. Oh, how important it is for us to think before we speak. Ask yourself, "How would I feel if someone said that to me?"

Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up (Proverbs 12:25).

When you're getting ready to speak, ask yourself if the words you will speak will cheer someone up, encourage an anxious heart. In Proverbs 15, we read *a gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger*. It is amazing to see the difference it makes when you think before you speak, and you choose words that are gentle and kind. Those words become words of life, and they are pleasing to the Lord Jesus.

What do you think? Can we get serious about thinking before we speak? It will make us more like the Lord Jesus, and we'll be a much more effective witness for him. If our think wristband will help you to think before you speak, then please contact us and we'll send it to you.