

Volume 1, Issue 11

# MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!



## The Elevator

How far a little kindness goes

## The Argument Against Arguments

How to break the habit

## Nails in the Gatepost

The scars remain

## News and Views

The boomerang effect of gossip

**3**     **The Teacher's Pillow**

**4**     **The Elevator**  
How far a little kindness goes...

**6**     **The Argument Against Arguments**

**8**     **Nails in the Gatepost**  
The scars remain

**8**     **Answers to Your Questions**  
How to resist the temptation to gossip

**9**     **News and Views**  
The boomerang effect of gossip

**12**    **Notable Quotes**  
Words are real things

**Issue Editors**

Volume 1, Issue 11  
Christina Lane  
Souad Abuhalmim  
awexdesign.com

**Design**

**Contact Us:**  
**Email Website**

motivated@motivatedmagazine.com  
www.motivatedmagazine.com

Copyright © 2004 by Motivated,  
all rights reserved

Arguing! We all do it sometimes. We all know what it is to walk away from an argument with the mouth dry, stomach in a knot, head hot and spinning, and heart sick—wishing that it had never happened, deeply regretting the unkind words that were said.

And then there's the temptation to gossip or talk critically of others. It may seem innocent enough at first, and we may not mean to hurt another. But oh, what damage can be done through a tongue out of control, unkind words, a bitter tongue, a tongue that says harsh critical things and lashes out at others.

We all know the negative effects of anger, arguments, and gossip, but what is the solution? What is the remedy? How do we communicate our ideas and feelings honestly with those we work, live, and come in contact with without sparking the fires of anger and argument? How can we ensure peace in our homes and workplaces and learn to handle disagreements in a mature, kind way and speak positively to our families or the people we work with?

The subject of positive communication and interaction is so vast that these few pages can hardly do the subject justice, but we tried to compile what we felt to be pertinent articles, tips, and stories on having positive human relations—an art so essential in today's troubled world. Learning to use even one or two of these "people skills" can make such a difference that you will most likely want to try and master them all.

Why not try to put these tips to the test, and see if your life, and the lives of those around you, aren't brightened in a delightful way, as they move you into deeper, more caring, understanding, and empathetic interaction with those around you.

Christina Lane  
For *Motivated*

# The Teacher's Pillow

—Author unknown

There once was a woman who did not like what a certain old and wise teacher would say to her. One day the old woman's words were more than she could bear. It was the truth, but it made her so angry that she really began to butt. She went everywhere telling lies and evil stories about her teacher. She tried very hard to turn people against her with her terrible talk and gossip. But the more she talked, the sadder she became. At last she was very unhappy, and began to feel sorry for all the lies she had told.

Finally, in tears, the woman went to the teacher's home to ask her to forgive her. "I have told so many lies about you", she said. "Please forgive me."

The old woman did not answer her for a long time. She seemed to be deep in thought. At last she said, "Yes, I will forgive you, but first you must do something for me."

"What do you want me to do?" she said, a little surprised.

"Come with me up to the roof and I will show you," she said, looking straight into her eyes, "but first I need to get something from my room."

When the teacher returned from her room, she carried a big feather pillow under her arm.

The poor woman could hardly hide her growing curiosity and keep from asking what the pillow was for, and why they were going up to the roof. However, she kept silent.

A little out of breath, they finally reached the top floor.

The wind blew softly. From the roof they could see far into the countryside that stretched out beyond the village.

Suddenly, without saying anything, the teacher ripped open the pillow and dumped all of the feathers out.

The soft breeze blew, picked them up and carried the feathers everywhere: Out onto the other roofs, into the streets, under the cars, up into the trees, out into the backyards where the children were playing, and even out to the big highway, and on and on, farther still into the distance.

The teacher and the woman watched the feathers flutter away for some time. At last the old teacher turned to the woman and said, "Now I want you to go and pick up all those feathers for me."

"Pick up all of those feathers?" she gasped. "But that is impossible!"

"Yes, I know," said the teacher. "Those feathers are like your lies about me. What you have started you cannot stop, even if you are sorry. You may be able to tell a few people that you told lies about me, but the winds of gossip have carried your lies everywhere. You can blow out a match, but you cannot blow out the great forest fire that one match can start!" ♥

**"You  
cannot  
blow out  
the great  
forest fire  
that one  
match can  
start!"**

# The Elevator



— Author unknown, adapted

**I used to gossip and think nothing of it, telling myself that I was only having fun in talking about other people behind their backs. But all that changed one day in an elevator.**

I was doing business in a very tall building downtown that I don't normally frequent. The office I had to go to was on the 26th floor, so I stepped into the elevator with several other people. By the 16th floor, everyone had gotten out except for a young man and myself. 18... 19... 20... 21. I watched the numbers light up as the elevator rapidly approached my floor. But midway between 24 and 25, there was a screeching sound and the elevator ground to a halt. Then silence.

The young man shifted his feet nervously as I stared in disbelief. I reached for the emergency telephone and called reception, letting them know of our predicament. They said help was on the way.

"Oh dear!" I said after I'd hung up, "I was going to floor 26! Which floor were you headed for?" The young man barely looked at me and didn't answer. *Maybe he's claustrophobic*, I thought, poor fellow. "Oh well, may as well make the best of it," I said aloud as I took off my jacket and slid down to a

sitting position on the carpeted floor of the elevator. After hesitating a moment, the young man also slid to the floor, opposite me, with a heavy sigh and a half-amused but resigned look on his face.

Ten minutes passed. 15 ... 20. I called reception again on the emergency telephone. They said the electrician was "tied up," but would be there as soon as possible. I resumed my seat as the young man chuckled and said aloud, "Just my luck."

"Are you missing an appointment too?" I asked him. He looked at me, opened his mouth as if to say something, looked away, then looked at me again, searching my eyes. He half smiled and said, "Did you ever hear the poem, 'I have a rendezvous with death?'"

I searched for a reason, hoping I could think of one better than the obvious one. The young man was looking at me and slowly said, "I was heading for the top of the building."

Suddenly I was so thankful that the electrician had been tied up. I was also

scared to death! Here I was, stuck in an elevator with a man who wanted to end his life. What I said or didn't say might have a profound effect on whether or not he would live to see another day.

"Why do you want to do it?" I said, asking the most obvious question. Robert—which I later found out was his name—hung his head and said, "I've been humiliated beyond belief. My fiancée is embarrassed to be around me, and I've discovered I have no true friends."

I was silent. He went on, "It all started with a jealous coworker who started some malicious rumors against me at work. My boss even asked me about it! I denied it up and down and tried to make him and my other coworkers see that it was just a fabrication from a jealous rival, but that's when the worst began.

"Instead of believing in me, some of my so-called 'friends' helped pass the rumor along, till it got around to my fiancée. She was horror-stricken! We had a terrible argument, with her insisting that there must be some truth in the rumors since she'd heard them from my friends, but it just wasn't so!

"Anyway, instead of being sorry, my friends just gave me the cold shoulder. I know they felt bad that they'd helped those rumors along; they thought they were just having fun, but now it was out of hand and they didn't want to associate with me.

"I got more and more depressed. My work was suffering, and my boss gave me a few days off to pull myself together. But things went from bad to worse. Even my father had a hard time believing me and was so disappointed."

I had been silent all this time, just listening, not knowing what to say.

Robert had related all this to me in a monotone voice, as if all the pain and hurt didn't even matter any longer because soon the heart that was hurting so bad wouldn't have to beat anymore. My own heart was hurting. I thought of my dear wife, my friends, my father. I thought of the decent job I had.

I looked at Robert, and he continued. "The last thing my fiancée said to me was that she wished she'd never met me, and that she couldn't marry a man with a disgraced name. Those so-called friends were the only ones I had. I only had one parent—my father. My mother passed on three years ago. What would you do if you were in my shoes?"

The question startled me out of my reverie. Yes, what would I do? It's pretty hard to live a positive life when everyone you love and trust has let you down and knifed you in the back. I was being asked the most difficult question of my life. My voice trembled as for the first time I truly put myself in Robert's place.

There were no sermons now, no pretty speeches. If Robert didn't jump today, he would tomorrow. In my heart I called out to the only One Who could answer Robert's question.

I looked into Robert's eyes, praying that I wouldn't sound trite in this, his darkest hour. Before the words passed through my lips, the tears were streaming down my face.

"I would pray," I said simply, in a voice barely above a whisper.

Robert closed his eyes, the tears also coming now. There, in a dimly lit, broken-down elevator, I prayed like I never had before. Aloud, I asked God to forgive me for all the times I had been careless with my words to the hurt of others. I told Him that I wanted another



# The **Argument** Against....

We all know that arguing for the sake of arguing is a pointless waste of time. We have absolutely nothing to gain, and our time, energy, and someone's friendship to lose. It has been said that the only people who really listen to an argument are the neighbors. So what can we do to avoid them? Or, once an argument has started, what can we do to stop it? Or if already over, what can we do to make amends?

I have made mistakes, but I have never made the mistake of claiming that I never made one.

## **The benefits of not arguing**

One young compulsive arguer loved nothing more than a good argument until a close friend took him aside and said, "Benny, you are impossible! Your opinions have a slap in them for everyone who differs with you. Your friends enjoy themselves better when you are not around. You think you know so much that no one can tell you anything. Indeed, no one is going to try, for the effort would only lead to discomfort and hard work. So you are not likely ever to know any more than you do now—which is actually very little!"

Benny was big and wise enough to accept these stinging truths, and to realize that he was headed for failure and social disaster. So he began to change his bigoted, argumentative ways. He went on to become a wise and diplomatic man, and is actually remembered for saying, "If you argue and rankle and contradict, you may achieve a victory sometimes. But it will be an empty victory, because you will never get your opponent's good will!"

## **It's impossible to win an argument**

No one ever really wins an argument. We can shout and scream and argue until we're blue in the face, but people are not going to believe that we are right unless they want to believe it. And even if they would like to agree with us, our tone may have put them so much on the defensive that it would be like an utter humiliation and defeat for them to confess we're right or even partly right. No amount of logic or argument will make anyone change his mind if he doesn't want to.

Nine times out of ten, an argument ends with each side more firmly convinced than ever that he is absolutely right. So it comes down to which we'd rather have—an academic, theoretical victory or a person's good will. We can seldom have both!



# Arguments

## How to win people to your way of thinking without having an argument

In Aesop's Fables, there's a story about the sun and the wind. In the story the argumentative wind boasted to the sun that he was the stronger. The sun maintained that he was. So the wind said, "I'll prove I am! See the old man down there with the coat? I'll bet I can get his coat off of him quicker than you can!"

So the sun went behind a cloud, and the wind blew and blew until it was almost a tornado! But the harder it blew, the tighter the old man clutched his coat to him. Finally the wind calmed down and gave up.

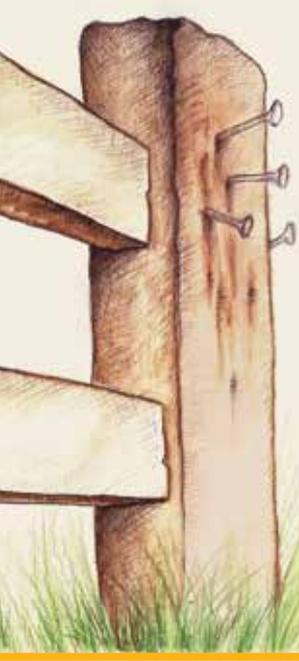
Then the sun came out from behind the cloud and smiled kindly on the old man. After awhile he mopped his brow and pulled off his coat. The sun had shown the wind that gentleness and friendliness were stronger than fury and force.

The moral of the story is that people usually don't want to change their minds. They can't be forced or driven to agree. But they may possibly be led to, if we are gentle and friendly. Showing consideration and that we care can make people change their minds far more easily than all the bluster and storming in the world. The best way to get somebody to do something is by making them want to do it. ♥

## How to not start an argument

- ❖ Realize that we may not always be right.
- ❖ Admit verbally at the start that we don't know everything and may be wrong.
- ❖ Never tell a person straight out we don't agree with him.
- ❖ Show respect for the other person's opinions.
- ❖ Never begin a discussion by announcing, "I'm going to prove so-and-so to you."
- ❖ Avoid argument-starting words, such as "You're wrong", or "That's a silly idea".
- ❖ Avoid sweeping generalizations such as: "You're never on time!", "You always say things like that!", "All women are emotional!", "All men are like that!", "Everyone thinks you are that way, and so do I!"
- ❖ Don't exaggerate or insinuate.
- ❖ Avoid frivolous talk or gossip about sensitive subjects.
- ❖ Never tell someone, "You should not feel that way!" Everyone has feelings that are uniquely their own, and they do feel that way, or they wouldn't have said it. Instead, ask them to tell you why they feel the way they do, or simply say, "I understand."
- ❖ A good motto to avoid starting an argument: "If I am wrong I will say so. If I am right I will be quiet!" Also, right at that moment may not be the very best time to tell someone we think they are wrong. It's better to wait until they are in a receptive frame of mind.

Continued on page 10



## NAILS in the Gatepost

AS A YOUNG BOY, I had a fiery temper that often caused me to say and do unkind things.

One day, after an argument had sent one of my playmates home in tears, my father told me that for each thoughtless, mean thing I did, he would drive a nail into the gatepost in front of our house. Each time I did a kindness or a good deed, he would pull one nail out.

Months passed. Each time I entered our gate, I was reminded of the reasons for those ever-increasing nails. Finally, getting them out became a challenge.

At last the wished-for day arrived—only one more nail! As my father withdrew it, I danced around proudly exclaiming, “See, Daddy, the nails are all gone!”

My father gazed intently at the post as he thoughtfully replied, “Yes, the nails are gone—but the scars remain.” ♥

—Author unknown

## { Answers to Your Questions }

Q:

My friends and I are in the habit of exchanging gossip about others. I sometimes feel bad about it because, to be honest, a lot of it is unkind or sarcastic. But I just can’t resist the desire to be in on “the latest.” Any advice?

A:

The Proverb says, “The tongue has the power of life and death.” Think of that! The words you say are real things. They can bless or curse, they can lift up or knock down, they can save or damn!

The old saying, “Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never hurt me,” is not true at all! Words can hurt to the point of someone giving up in despair, in people feeling so discouraged and hurt that it affects their health and mental well-being. It can put such a negative spin on things for some people that what could have been a productive life or career is ruined.

These may seem like extreme examples, but honestly now, is it that extreme? Haven’t there ever been times when you’ve felt so low and discouraged because of someone’s cruel, unkind words that you felt like giving up or even wished you were dead? Or maybe you have wounded someone else that way.

Let’s face it, we’ve all been guilty at some time or another of hurting others with our words. Maybe they were unintentional, maybe they were intended in fun, but they were unkind and hurtful just the same.

Maybe at that very moment the other person was longing for a word of encouragement, but instead our cutting words wounded deeply and left an ugly scar. This poem makes the point poignantly:



# NEWS & VIEWS

## The boomerang effect of gossip. (UPI)

If I knew that a  
word of mine,  
A word not kind  
and true,  
Might leave its trace  
On a loved one's face,  
I don't think I'd speak it.  
— Would you?

If I knew that the  
sting of a word  
Might linger and leave  
its mark,  
With a deep dark scar  
On a loved one's heart,  
I don't think I'd speak it.  
— Would you?

—Author unknown

It often only takes a few words hastily spoken to start things going wrong.

So how can we guard against that thoughtless, unkind word that can leap so quickly from our lips? What can we do to tame our tongues?

Well, try as we may, we can't! It has been said, "Every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue." The only way to fully tame our tongues is by asking God to change our hearts, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. If our heart is filled with love, then the words of our mouth will be filled with love and compassion. ♥

Psst...be careful what you say, it may come back to haunt you. A new study finds that if you describe someone as athletic, cruel, talented, or dishonest, the listener will often see you the same way. The researchers conducted a series of four studies among university students to demonstrate that communicators become associated with the traits they describe in others. Some 75 to 80 percent of the students unconsciously transferred traits to the communicators of the information.

## Negativity

By Dr. J. Allan Peterson, Better Families

Humanity is prone to a negative mental attitude. Society's input is predominantly negative. Our conversations at home accentuate the negative.

Research shows that for every one negative thing you say to a child, you must say four positive things to keep the balance. And yet, how quick all of us are to pick out and emphasize the flaws and failures, but how slow we are to praise.

Behavioral researcher Shad Helmsletter concurs, "Most of the everyday suggestions in our society are extremely negative. Violent TV translates into a more violent culture. Sensationalism in the media toward immediate gratification may well have helped produce the almost immediate use of harmful drugs.

A big-city newspaper agreed not to put any stories about violence on the front page for a year. During that period the rate of violence in that city dropped significantly! As soon as the stories reappeared on the front page, the violence rate jumped right back up to where it had been before.

It is also calculated that in an average home from birth until a child reaches the late teen years, he has heard negative comments such as, 'It can't be done,' 'You shouldn't do that,' 'It's impossible', 148,200 times."

What we give out will come back to us. The finest gift we can give another human being is the gift of an excellent expectation. The principle "give and it shall be given unto you" applies to expressing appreciation, too. ♥

## How to **stop** the other person **arguing** with us

- ▶ Remember, it takes two to make an argument.
- ▶ Stay out of such conversations as: “No, I don’t!”, “Yes, you do!”, “No, I don’t!”  
Make delay the first strategy for avoiding a potential conflict. The first thing to do when someone acts negatively toward us or gets angry is to keep our cool.
- ▶ Form the habit of closing the mouth when angry.
- ▶ Be endlessly patient when faced with an argument.
- ▶ When another person is angry, the worst thing we can do is to say, “Now don’t get angry!” Instead, try saying as gently as possible, “I’m sorry, something is making you angry? If it’s me, I apologize! What can I do to help?”
- ▶ Remember also that our spirits are contagious. If we show the right spirit and the right attitude—peaceful, trusting, patient, restful, and full of faith—this is how others will react. But if we get flustered and impatient, start ranting and raving, and get sharp-tempered and sharp-tongued, this is apt to be the same way that others will also answer us, sad to say.

As a man grows wiser, he talks less and says more.

A wise man changes his mind sometimes, a fool never.

## How to **stop** an **argument** — once it’s **already** started

- ▶ Stay on the subject.
- ▶ Watch your volume.
- ▶ Don’t exaggerate.
- ▶ Attack the problem, not each other. Do the utmost to keep the discussion impersonal.
- ▶ Emphasize things you agree on. Don’t emphasize the things on which you differ. Keep emphasizing that you are both striving for the same end and your only difference is one of method and not purpose.
- ▶ Be willing to meet the other person halfway.
- ▶ Have the humility to back down, even if you still think you’re right and the other person is wrong.
- ▶ If you’re wrong, admit it.

## How to make up after an argument

Even if we were right, we should take the initiative to forgive and forget. When it is appropriate, we need to ask for forgiveness and not hold grudges. If we find it hard to forgive, we can remind ourselves that it takes a lot of energy to hold a grudge, and that there is great peace of mind to be found in forgiveness.



Continued from page 5

## How to overcome the root causes of arguing

Greed and selfishness are often the root causes of arguing. Other arguments are caused by pride. Many arguments are caused by someone pushing a point. Because they think that they are so right, they put themselves up and the other person down by contradicting them.

What it all boils down to is a lack of love. Arguing isn't the real problem, it's just the symptom. Lack of love and care is the real problem. One of the biggest lessons in life that we can learn is how to love and care about people, how to work with them, how to treat them, how to give the other person the benefit of the doubt, how to build them up unselfishly, instead of selfishly tearing them down through contention and argument. A big part of learning to love is to put ourselves in other people's shoes.

The best thing we can do if we have a problem with arguing is to pray and ask God to give us more love and to help us to overcome the habit of arguing. He will help us as we try to apply all the practical pointers that are covered in this article. As we do, our mindset will change and we'll have more joy, patience, peace, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control as a result. Try it! It will make your life so much happier! ❤️

chance, that in this one life I had to live I wanted to make a difference in others' lives, and that I wanted that difference to be for the better.

I felt as though I'd been the one who had hurt Robert. After all, the people who had done so much wrong to his soul and his will to live were probably not much different than me. By the time I was done, it was Robert's turn. He too prayed and asked God for another chance at life, asking for the hope to live it. It seemed like hours passed in those small confines.

Well, the electrician finally showed up, and while two strangers had entered that elevator, one a desperate man, and the other a man who needed a change of heart, there now emerged two renewed creatures. Robert and I became the best of friends. How could we not after going through that together? I invited him home for dinner that night, and for many nights afterward.

Slowly Robert's life was pieced back together. He met another woman. He got another job. He reconciled with his father. God blessed him with a family. And God had blessed me too. He gave me the opportunity to see how very short life can be and how far-reaching the very damaging effects of hurtful words are—as well as how far just a little kindness goes. ❤️

# Words are real things

The more arguments you win, the fewer friends you'll have.

The greatest remedy for anger is delay.

Silence is one of the most beautiful, impressive, and inspiring things known to man. Don't break it unless you can improve on it.

It is usually best to be generous with praise, but cautious with criticism.

A kind word picks up a man when trouble weighs him down.

Tact is the knack of making a point without turning someone against you.

The best of speech is to let your words be few.

When angry, count to ten before speaking. When very angry, count to one hundred and then don't speak.

A wise man said, "Hold your tongue except in four things: to declare truth, to denounce wrong, to show thankfulness for a good deed, or to give advice."

The art of silence is as great as that of speech.

One secret of successful conversation is learning to disagree without being disagreeable.

Words  
lost in the surf  
still soothe  
the soul