

The Power of Words

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by Claire Colvin.

Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words . . . can wound forever.

Pictures of me as a little kid are really cute — curly blond hair, a quick smile and eyes always looking for the next adventure. I had the confidence that comes from knowing you are truly loved. If we painted pictures at school, I painted three. I was the product of an almost perfect childhood, but I didn't stay that way.

Around grade six I became the kid everyone picked on. Maybe I didn't wear the right clothes, maybe kids are just mean sometimes, for whatever reason it started and it kept going. By high school there was a group of four or five guys who told me I was stupid and ugly every single day.

I believed them.

It is amazing what you accept as truth when you hear it enough times. As my confidence faltered and my self esteem withered away I stopped talking in class, in groups, or in the hallways. I dreaded lunch hour, never stepped foot inside the cafeteria and the thought of class presentations literally made me sick. I stopped smiling. They tell me I went a whole year and never smiled once.

Convinced I was worthless I would stress over every test and paper even though my grades were consistently excellent. My whole life revolved around being as invisible as possible. I thought that I couldn't get hurt if everyone forgot I was there. I had so little respect for myself and I was so afraid that I considered suicide. I got as far as choosing a method but decided that I couldn't go through with it. Suicide is something you can't take back. I was still thinking clearly enough to be able to consider what it would have done to my family. I don't think that suicide is always a conscious choice, but for me I had not yet arrived at a place where it was beyond my control. I know that's not always the case and I am grateful that I got a second chance.

Things did not improve so halfway through grade eleven I transferred to a different high school in a desperate attempt to get away. It worked, but it did not solve my problems. **The insults stopped but I still had to face myself, running wasn't going to fix that.** That summer I attended a conference with the youth group from my church and found answers in the last place I would have expected.

At the conference I came to realize that God loves me very, very much. I matter to God, what an incredible truth! Suddenly I had value, I had something to build on and the healing began. The world is a scary place when you stop liking yourself. Now I had hope. I had learned about God as a child, but just trying to survive had consumed me and I had long since forgotten about Him. God had not forgotten about me.

During my second year of university, I came across the verse in the Bible that is one of my favorites,

"I have chosen you and have not rejected you. So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." (Isaiah 41:9&10)

Words are powerful things and God's words of love are the most powerful of all. I smile a lot now — I guess I'm still making up for that one silent year — and while I doubt I'll ever be a public speaker, I no longer walk around with my eyes on the floor. I am still learning, but my Mom tells me that I remind her of this little girl she used to know with curly blond hair, a quick smile and a glint of adventure in her eyes.

Though much is taken, much abides;
And though we are not now that strength
Which in old days moved earth and heaven
That which we are, we are:
One equal temper of heroic hearts
Made weak by time and fate but strong in will:
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.
~Tennyson, from "Ulysses"

Take a look at your life. How would you describe it? Contented? Rushed? Exciting? Stressful? Moving forward? Holding back? For many of us it's all of the above at times. There are things we dream of doing one day, there are things we wish we could forget. In the Bible, it says that Jesus came to make all things new. **What would your life look like if you could start over with a clean slate?**

Living with hope

If you are looking for peace, there is a way to balance your life. No one can be perfect, or have a perfect life. But every one of us has the opportunity to experience perfect grace through a personal relationship with God through His Son, Jesus Christ.

You can receive Christ right now by faith through prayer. Praying is simply talking to God. God knows your heart and is not so concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart. Here's a suggested prayer:

Lord Jesus, I want to know you personally. Thank you for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life to you and ask you to come in as my Savior and Lord. Take control of my life. Thank you for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Make me the kind of person you want me to be.

Does this prayer express the desire of your heart? You can pray it right now, and Jesus Christ will come into your life, just as He promised. **Is this the life for you?**

If you invited Christ into your life, thank God often that He is in your life, that He will never leave you and that you have eternal life. As you learn more about your relationship with God, and how much He loves you, you'll experience life to the *fullest*.

~ [Claire Colvin](#) is the editor of *Women Today*. She has a BA in English from Trinity Western University, a cat named after a Tolkien hero and dreams of living in Tuscany, even if it's just for the summer.