



## **“MY WORDS”** *“growing integrity & consistency”*

Back in the good old days if farmers shook hands, their words and hand shake was like making a promise or swearing an oath. The farmer’s word was “as good as gold” as long as what they said and agreed upon then matched what the farmers did. Trust was based upon words matching actions and actions matching words. We call that kind of internal consistency “integrity.” **A person of integrity will do what they say they will do.**

One of our growing problems is that most people have been hurt at some time in our lives by people who have not kept their word. Several results may have occurred: First, we don’t trust the people around us. Second, we make excuses for not keeping our word. Third, we don’t take seriously the words we say to one another. Words become so casual that “keeping our word” or signing an agreement is no longer a big deal.

In a healthy environment, trust, integrity, and consistency are all important values. These important values will grow when we create environments where we stop and think before we speak and act. Trust, integrity, and consistency also grow when we reward these values and when we create negative consequences for not keeping our word. Here are some good questions for us to consider:

- What happens if I show up late to work or if I don’t come to work some day?
- What happens if I tell someone “yes” I’ll do \_\_\_\_\_ for you, but I don’t do it?
- What happens when our words and actions match?

As we strive to create safer, trusting, healthier environments, let’s **“watch our words”** so that **the words we use are good and they match what we actually do.** Trust building, consistency, and integrity will all improve as we practice these two basic steps:

1. Write down what I say I’ll do and be careful to do it in a timely manner.
2. Use good words that help people. Here is a good filter for our words from Eph. 4:29.

**“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.”**

Overall, we do a pretty good job of communicating and helping one another until we get tired, frustrated, stressed, and overworked. Then the words that spill out from the overflow of our heart are not so good. The Bible tells us that one day we must give an account to God for every careless word we have spoken. (Mt. 12:36) So here is a short prayer we can use when things get tough:

**Dear Lord, I am feeling frustrated and stressed out. I need your help. Watch over my heart and my words. Fill me with your love and grace so that the words I choose will honor You and honor people. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.**

- **What words do you use that bother or offend the people around you?**
- **What words are spoken around you that hurt you or cause you to clam up?**

**“Health Talks”** are designed to help us learn to talk and deal with one another in ways that build understanding and a healthy, growing, supportive, Christian community.