

## Teaching Teens That Words Matter



***"Whether from a best friend, favorite celebrity, Don Imus, or even from the U.S. Senate floor, teens are learning that once taboo four-letter words and derogatory statements can be used at any time and at any place."***

It seems like the world just doesn't care how perverse language has become. Profanity and put-downs have become the normal language of many teenagers, including some Christian teens. A survey of public high school students found that more than 75 percent reported hearing so-called adult language frequently in the halls and cafeteria (boston.com). Whether from a best friend, favorite celebrity, Don Imus, or even from the U.S. Senate floor, teens are learning that once taboo four-letter words and derogatory statements can be used at any time and at any place. Some parents have even become more lax in dealing with cussing. Thoughts may cross their minds such as, "Cussing and language are the least of my worries. I've got bigger issues to worry about than that." If you have this attitude, remember that little "worries" will eventually become big ones if not dealt with properly. As you begin talking to your teen about his or her speech, here are some areas on which to focus. Cussing does not equal "cool." In fact, profanity gives off the perception of being unintelligent, unimaginative, and just status quo. Help your teen understand there is a link between cussing and moods. Foul language is hostile, and using it actually can increase angry feelings. In turn, feeling angry makes swearing more prone to happen again, and the vicious cycle continues. Help your teen find alternative words to express emotions. Remember, a scrambled version of a four letter word is not an option, so pick a nicer word that might help change their mood more quickly. Ultimately, parents must set the example by what is said, watched, and listened to. Finally, the most important thing that can be done is prayer. Pray your teen will have a pure heart as well as a pure tongue.

### ***Cuscontrol.com gives teens (and parents) some tips for taming your tongue:***

- 1. Recognize that swearing does damage.** While there are many reasons (or excuses) to cuss, it is good to remember the negatives outweigh the positives.
- 2. Cope, don't cuss.** Consider even the smallest annoyance a challenge, and feel proud of yourself for taking care of it cheerfully and efficiently.
- 3. Stop complaining.** Before you start griping or whining about something, remind yourself of a very important reality: no one wants to hear it!
- 4. Use alternative words.** Take the time to develop your own list of alternatives to the nasty words you now use, relying on your own intelligence.
- 5. Make your point politely.** Take the time to make your point in a mature manner.
- 6. Work at it.** It takes practice, support from others, and a true desire to stop - not only by controlling your language, but the emotions that prompt you to swear.



### **Here are some interesting points to ponder regarding language.**

#### **Are you more or less likely to buy products from companies that use profanity (or joke around with it) in their commercial campaigns?**

- 5% - Much more. It shows that they're edgy and cool.
- 4% - More. It shows they're innovative.
- 38% - Less. It shows only that they're crude and rude.
- 54% - Much Less. In fact, I'd avoid them altogether. (pluggedinonline.com)

#### **Adults were asked: How often do you personally use swear words in conversation?**

- 16% - Several times a day
  - 10% - Once a day
  - 21% - A few times a week
  - 12% - A few times a month
  - 8% - About once a month
  - 12% - A few times a year
  - 21% - Never
- (Associated Press-Ipsos poll)

## The Parent POV

(point of view)

**Think you know what kind of language your teen uses when you are not around? Take some time to ask these questions...you just might be surprised.**

1. With all the things that you are faced with, do you think cussing or telling a dirty joke is really a big deal? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think so many teens and adults cuss on a daily basis?
3. What do you think about a person who uses bad language? Do you think the way a person talks is a reflection of who they are? Why or why not?
4. Do you find it hard at times to watch what you say? When do you struggle with cussing the most?



## Focus on Prayer

### Pray that:

1. Your teen will realize the power of words and that words can be damaging weapons to a person.
2. God will give each family member much patience and self-control before opening their mouth in any situation.
3. God will provide your teen with godly friends who will hold them accountable in speech, actions, and attitudes.
4. God will help you watch your language and even your tone, as you set the right example for your family.

### Verse of the month

**"To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech." Proverbs 8:13 (NIV)**

Solomon wrote Proverbs to teach his son (and us) insight and wisdom into who God is and how to live a godly life. In chapter eight, Solomon writes from the perspective of Wisdom, emphasizing that She (Wisdom) is "more precious than rubies." In verse 13, Wisdom then says that we are to hate evil. We know God hates evil, but we are to hate it ourselves. The question you should ask of your life is, "How much do you hate evil?" Think about this...it is very easy to hate murder, but how many times have you "murdered" with your speech? In the very same verse God shows us areas of evil that He hates, and talks specifically about how He hates perverse speech. As Christians, this verse should speak volumes to all of us on how important God values our speech and how we use our words.



### Did you know...

- \* A poll by Zogby International found that 72 percent of those polled wanted television programming to have positive, anti-promiscuity and anti-violence messages. ([verticalthought.org](http://verticalthought.org))
- \* 67% of Americans say they think people curse and swear more often than they did 20 years ago. ([jsonline.com](http://jsonline.com))
- \* Nearly three-quarters of Americans questioned last week — 74 percent — said they encounter profanity in public frequently or occasionally, according to an Associated Press-Ipsos poll. ([msnbc.com](http://msnbc.com))
- \* 69% of parents are concerned that their teens hear "adult language" on TV, and 67% of parents think TV gives teens the wrong idea about what is acceptable. ([moralityinmedia.org](http://moralityinmedia.org))

## Music alternative

Bonafide (Teron Carter) and Coffee (Stacy Jones) make up this hip-hop/rap duo known as Grits. With over twelve years experience, eight albums, two Grammy nods, three Dove Awards, a Billboard Video Award, and a host of other signposts, Grits knows about success in the Christian and secular industries. Coffee originally started on the Atlanta music scene while Bonafide emerged from Jacksonville, FL. The two relocated to Nashville, met, and formed Grits in 1993. In this genre, Grits has fought to bring "more mainstream exposure to hip-hop's life affirming alternatives, that is, renaissance rappers with genuine style and spiritually uplifting joints." [gotee.com](http://gotee.com)

## trends

### Below are the top female accessories for a day at the beach.

1. Oversized Sunglasses
2. Big, Oversized Canvas Bag
3. Funky Hats
4. Bold Cuff Bracelets
5. Cool Bathing Suit cover-ups (sarongs and gypsy tops)

For the guys, keep it simple: t-shirt and board shorts are all you need this summer. [foxnews.com](http://foxnews.com)

## musicspotlight



### Albums:

"King" - 3/2006

"Urban Legend" - 11/2004

"Trap Muzik" - 8/2003

**Background:** T.I., born Clifford Harris in Atlanta, Georgia, "established himself as one of rap's greatest and most successful MC's during the early 2000's." His following consistently grew, and from 2003 to 2006, all of his albums, which were released by Atlantic Records, were Top Ten albums. "King" was released in tandem with his debut screen appearance in ATL. Many legal issues and much trouble has followed him. He has been entangled in disputes with other rappers (Ludacris and Lil' Flip), as well as serving prison time for probation violations. In 2006, T.I.'s crew was involved in a shooting after a show in Cincinnati which injured three and killed one person. [sonicnet.com/rap.about.com](http://sonicnet.com/rap.about.com)

**What Parents Should Know:** Although his new album is not scheduled to release until July 3, 2007, all of his albums contain Parental Advisory warnings. The content of his songs deal with drugs, alcohol, sex, and graphic profanity.

**Parent/Teen Q&A:** T.I. says, "I ain't doing nothing small. If I buy a car, I'm buying the biggest car on the lot...I got 17 cars. So what am I buying another car for unless it's the best car on the lot." [mtv.com](http://mtv.com) Q: Do you think it's OK to want only the best? Why or why not? How could this way of thinking get you in trouble?



## filmwatch

Will your teens be seeing these movies this summer? Know what's playing.

| TITLE            | RATING | RED FLAGS   | GENRE                  | STARRING  |
|------------------|--------|---|------------------------|---|
| Gracie           | PG-13  | For brief sexual content  | Drama, sports, tragedy | Carly Schroeder, Elisabeth Shue, Dermot Mulroney, Andrew Shue |
| Ocean's Thirteen | PG-13  | For brief sensuality  | Comedy                 | George Clooney, Matt Damon, Casey Affleck, Bernie Mac         |
| Hostel: Part II  | R      | For sadistic scenes of torture and bloody violence, terror, nudity, sexual content, language, and some drug content | Horror                 | Lauren Geman, Bijou Phillips, Jay Hernandez                   |