

“Speak to your children as if they are the wisest, kindest, most beautiful and magical humans on earth, for what they believe is what they will become.” Brooke Hampton

Words are powerful and we parents and teachers have the opportunity to choose them mindfully. There is a destructive word that I have heard used recently and I truly believe that it should be forbidden by all Suzuki parents. Quite honestly I would like to outlaw it everywhere, but let's start with our Suzuki family. This word has such potential for long-term damage to your child's confidence I wish it were considered off limits for anyone with whom your child comes into contact. I believe this word is far worse than any standard crass, four letter word.

Which word am I talking about?

“NERVOUS.”

Children don't know the meaning of words until we teach them and music is simply another language. Performing is sharing the gift of music with others. We strive to teach the skill of performing with a joyful, giving, confident and loving spirit. Parents and teachers imprint words into children's brains not only with our verbal usage, but also with our emotional usage. “Nervous” is how you, an adult, feel at times; perhaps you were raised using this word. Take a moment and imagine your world without the word “nervous” and its pessimistic implications. How would your life be different? Could you have accomplished more in your life without that word and its negative feelings? Have you ever procrastinated or avoided doing something because of that debilitating word?

Now replace the word “nervous” with “excited.” I am *excited* to buy a new house, *excited* to be starting a new job, *excited* about having a baby

and *excited* about performing on a recital. Why do you have feelings of excitement? You have butterflies because you CARE. You have worked hard putting away money to buy your new house, you have worked hard to have the opportunity for a new job, you love your family and understand the responsibility of bringing a child into the world, and you have spent many hours practicing your recital piece and are now *excited* to be able to share it with your audience. You are invested, you care, you have butterflies and you are *excited*. If a performance is not anticipated with excitement it cannot sing the spirit of the music.

As an adult you have the capacity to give yourself this gift; you can change the way you use self-talk. As a parent the possibilities are even greater; you have the opportunity to raise a human being free of the emotional inhibitions of a psychologically limiting and controlling word. Take the opportunity and be EXCITED!

“All the flowers of all the tomorrows are in the seeds of today.”
Unknown.

In gratitude,
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