

Killer and Igniter Phrases

By Virginia Reeves

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Virginia Reeves
articles@rainbowopportunities.ws

Rainbow Opportunities <http://www.rainbowopportunities.ws>

KILLER AND IGNITER PHRASES

The following phrases can bring either a smile or a grimace to your face. Many will trigger emotional responses that you may have carried around since childhood. How do these affect us personally? What effect do they have on productivity? By focusing attention in either a positive or negative manner, we influence not only our thoughts and actions but those of everyone we interact with.

KILLER PHRASES

The use of technical language or the use of professional or societal jargon that deliberately separates people into groups of them and us.

Gobbledygook (like political or medical people like to use), unfamiliar words or mutli-syllabic expressions.

Cliches instead of usable practical points. This can be laziness or a put-down when over-used.

You'll be told when I think it is appropriate to do so. So demeaning.

This is not your concern; not your job; not your department. Talk about being left out and crushed.

You don't know the background of this issue so stay out of it. This eliminates a fresh viewpoint.

What's wrong and the reply is nothing. This is majorly frustrating and completely unproductive. As Charlie Brown (in the comics) would say: Aargh.....!

We've never done it that way.

That's not the way we do things here.

We've tried that before.

Let's be practical.

Has anyone else ever tried it?

Who do you think you are?

What makes you think you can do it?

Don't be ridiculous or silly.

IGNITER PHRASES

Please and thanks. Short and easy words that are so important. Use them frequently.

You made a mistake, I've done it too. Is it something we can fix. How?

Now it's time to let go of the incident. You can start fresh. I know you are sorry. If you feel you need forgiveness, you have it.

You did the right thing. Even though it wasn't easy, you did it. I'm proud of you. Be proud of yourself.

You can change your mind. It's good to make a decision but it is also fine to change. What a great idea! You were really thinking. How did you come up with that? Tell me more. You did something helpful and thoughtful. That must make you feel good. It makes me feel good.

I heard your request for help. Here I am. What can we do together to get this done. I know you can do it yourself but I'm glad to help since you asked.

I'm sorry. What an impact these two words can have. For you and the recipient.

Keep up the good work.

We can always depend on you.

You have my backing.

You can do it!

Being able to clearly answer the question: what's in it for me (sometimes called station WIIFM). It remains the key, attention-getting point of view.

When requesting that someone change their behavior or working on instilling a new habit - try using the verbal sandwich approach.

- use gentle and positive reinforcing words for what is being done well or correctly
- address the problem and apply the correction or discipline
- provide encouragement and an affirmation that the person is good and you have faith in them to put things right

Paint word pictures so the listener can better visualize your point.

Use metaphors by comparing two things. These don't have to be alike - in fact, differences can make the point more effective.

Use anecdotes and stories - show your human side. Keep them short and simple.

Insert humor where appropriate.

Be descriptive - get listeners to employ their senses (sight, sound, touch, taste)

Consider how you use these and similar phrases in your daily life. We often say them without considering let alone realizing the impact they can have. Being mindful of whether we are killing or igniting someone else will ideally make us more sensitive to how we use words that lead to the type of relationships we build.

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