

By Nancy Whitaker:

A SMILE, A WINK AND A THUMBS UP

How many times have we said, "I wish I hadn't said that." "I wish I could take those words back," or "I just stuck my foot in my mouth by saying those words?"

Some people are born to talk, while some are not as verbal. As for me, I think I could talk before I was potty trained. I do remember a conversation being held at church when I was little and I chirped up and put in my two cents worth.

My grandma was involved in the discussion and what I repeated was something I had heard grandma repeat at home about another church goer. Needless to say I was told that children should be seen and not heard.

Unkind words can hurt others. They are hard to take back once they have been said and the damage is already done. We say things to people like, "you little brat," "fatso," "freckle face," "stupid" and "bird brain."

An illustration of how hard it is to take something back it has been said is to squeeze toothpaste out on a paper plate to symbolize how many times a day we use hurtful words against someone. Then try putting the toothpaste back into the tube.

It is difficult if not impossible to put the toothpaste back in its tube. The same is true for nasty words and comments.

I was always the smallest kid in my school class. When it came time for gym or recess and we played a game, I was always chosen last. I was called names like “shorty,” “half-pint” and “short stuff.” No one would ever want me on their team for softball or Red Rover because I just was not fast or strong enough because of my size.

Even though I eventually learned to ignore comments from other students, I still remember how bad those words and actions made me feel.

It is just not words that hurt a person’s feelings but facial expressions and gestures can also make us feel bad. Sometimes a facial expression such as a wink or a big smile can make someone’s day. Then there is the waving of the hands. If you know someone, you wave your hand to say, “Hello.”

Then there is the never grow old handshake. A handshake is another hello or a glad to meet you gesture that we do.

Also a “thumbs up” is a nice gesture to give someone to let them know they are doing a good job or you like what they are doing. However, if you give a “thumbs down” it can make a person lose every bit of self confidence they have.

A hug always makes us feel good, wanted and comforted. The closeness of a hug makes the hardest heart melt. Then too, a drawn fist can scare the wits out of someone.

We should all try and use nice kind words, smile, and use nice gestures but, hey, everyone has a bad day once in a while. There are days that I feel like using bad words, frowning, and yes even thumbing my nose at people.

There are days that are better than other days and my words, expressions and gestures are more outgoing and positive.

None of us are perfect and sometimes by words, expressions or gestures, we unknowingly hurt others. But, there is a wise old quote to live by and it goes like this, "I must learn to love the fool in me the one who feels too much, talks too much, takes too many chances, wins sometimes and loses often, lacks self-control, loves and hates, hurts and gets hurt, promises and breaks promises, laughs and cries."

Now to end this column my kind words are going to be, "God bless you." My facial expression is a wink and my gesture to you is a "thumbs up."

Do others hurt your feelings by words, expressions, or gestures? Do you ever have a bad day where you feel like crying or a good day when you break out in song? Let me know and I'll give you a Penny for Your Thoughts.