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WORDS I WISH WERE NEVER INVENTED

The first word I'd like you to consider dropping from your language is the word "**But**". It conveys that whatever you say post-"but", will invalidate whatever you said pre-"but". For instance, "You are lovely, but.....". Or, "I want to go, but...". What I'd like you to consider is changing the word "but" to "**and**", so that both truths get to stand and have equal power. For instance, "I'd love to go, **and** my appointment will not be out in time for me to make it." The message you send is that you do, indeed, want to go. That truth does not get invalidated when you explain why you can't.

Consider not using the words: **Should, Need, Have to** and **Must**. They are all really the same word and usually feel like they come from a parental, shaming place. They also take away choice. We not only use these words on others, but we use them on ourselves. People tend to rebel (either consciously or unconsciously) when they are shamed. So, if you tell yourself "***I should go to the gym***", notice how reticent you become.

If you would use different language, then it begins to feel like a choice and not someone (even yourself) telling you "what's good for you." So, for example, "***It is really important to me that I go to the gym***", or "***I really want to complete that paperwork tonight***," might allow you to feel encouraged to complete it rather than shamed into doing it. In other words, we are loving ourselves and others into doing things, and not shaming and criticizing them into it.

What I suggest for options to these words:

Instead of should, need, have to, must:

Could

You might think about...

You might consider...

Would you consider...

Would you be able...

Would you be willing...

It is important...

It is a priority...

Try these two sentences on and feel how different they sound:

“Thanks so much for dinner, but you cooked it too late. We shouldn’t be eating so late. You should start it by 7, so we could eat earlier.”

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*“ I really appreciated you cooking dinner for me tonight **and** I just wanted to let you know that I’ll probably need to eat earlier in the evening in the future.” (**and the follow-up**), “So, would you consider starting dinner by 6, so we could eat by 7?”*

I know the second sentence has more words than the first sentence. Remember, we are trying to be relational, not conserve words. The second sentence ensures that the person probably won’t feel unappreciated or shamed and would be more willing to make a dinner that you enjoy **and** that fits better into your schedule. (Because both truths get equal weight.)

The main point is that you create invitations that **decrease the power struggles in relationships**. Even when those relationships are with yourself! Good luck and feel free to add to the list!

