

Tame your tongue, fingers too

The social media, particularly Facebook, has introduced me to a new world; a world that reeks of people's bad taste and poor choices. Welcome to the world of cursing!

Growing up, I was told by my parents that I should never use swear words because it was bad manners and also a sin.

As I grew up, I realised that cursing was in no way a pleasant thing to do. But looking around me, I see that cursing has become commonplace, especially among our youths. I have noticed this practice on Facebook, particularly on troll pages and fan pages of entertainers and athletes.

People also swear at complete strangers on comment threads of various public posts. Offenders pretty much swear at everything and everyone usually without reason.

WHY DO THEY DO THIS?

Our education, upbringing and people we mingle with play important roles in whether we will swear in our everyday life or not. Have you ever seen a university professor cursing in public? Perhaps not. Here in the U.S. and also in Bangladesh, I have seen parents swearing in front of small children. It's very likely that children living in such homes will grow up thinking that cursing publicly is a normal human behaviour. They will take these profane words to school and teach other children as well.

Psychologists think that swearing is often cathartic. In an article published on the website of PsychCentral, John M. Grohol, Psy.D., writes that we swear because "it frees us of the feelings of anger or frustration we hold and allows expression for them." So, should we conclude that people who verbally abuse other people on the social media are frustrated in real life? Do they lash out of feelings of inadequacy? Perhaps.

WHY IS CURSING BAD?

Swearing is bad because it reflects ignorance, immaturity, and a lack of character; it shows that a person has no control over himself and it sets a bad example for children and also other people. It reduces the respect people have for you; and it also makes you an unpleasant person to be with. Cursing changes a discussion into an argument; it also pollutes any environment.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Established in 1998, Curse Control Academy is an organisation based in Illinois, US, that offers presentations and classes on personal control of profanity. Their website contains some useful tips for people who want to tame their tongue. I would also add fingers, because a lot of cursing now takes place on the social media, where people curse from their computers and cell phones.

The recent incident that took place with cricketer Nasir Hossain's fan page is just one glaring example of how normal cursing has become. According to CCA, the most important thing is to recognise that swearing is a harmful habit.

Although cursing can sometimes be therapeutic, the negatives of cursing outweigh the positives. People, who swear, must start by eliminating casual swearing from their everyday lexicon. Others around them can help them too.

Our languages are rich and colourful, and instead of using swear words we can choose alternative words to express our anger, frustration, sadness or pain. If we do that, we can express our emotions without disrespecting others. Words once uttered cannot be taken back, and therefore we should think twice before opening our mouth. In the virtual world of course we can edit or delete an abusive comment.

We don't dwell in a perfect world but our aim should be to cope, not to complain. The less you complain, the less you will curse. Together, we can make the public space clean and profanity-free.

By Wara Karim

FROM CENTRE

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By Subhi Shama

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