

Profanity shows less intelligent side

Using bad words is not as cool as it sounds



Katie Ehle

Something caught our adviser's attention the other day after her School-to-Career class had been using the computers in the lab. Using a stapler, three words were very carefully constructed and stapled into the edge of the computer counter. Let's just say the words were very inappropriate for any teacher to see or hear in their classroom.

But the words can be heard on any MTV show, a PG-13 movie, the Friday night football game, and even at the lunch table. Profanity has slipped its way into our everyday speech since before junior high and as the years passed, our bad word vocabulary grew and grew

“Profanity has slipped its way into our everyday speech...”

from watching TV and movies and listening to music and older classmates. This has caused two problems. First, teenagers and many grown-ups think it is cool to swear. Second, the average spoken vocabulary has deteriorated to the point that teens lack the words to adequately express themselves, so swearing is easier.

I grew up under the constant threat that if I said any kind of bad word, I would have to sit on the

edge of the bath tub with a bar of soap in my mouth to “clean” it out. In my house, this included insignificant words like “shut up” and “fart.” I only had to “eat” soap one time to get the point that I couldn't let my mom hear me say anything inappropriate. So when I first learned a few bad words in 5th grade, I felt like I was breaking some invisible rule whenever I said them. And I wanted to say them a lot. I felt grown up. When I said them though, I was always scared there would be

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someone around that would hear me and tell my mom. Soap isn't very satisfying.

The charm profanity had in elementary school eventually wore off. I found other ways to be grown up without saying anything profane. Now I associate profanity with losers. People who can't keep a conversation because of their lack of words. People who are always mad and complaining about something. People who don't want respect. People who want to be losers forever.

If we're only saying bad words to

rebel against the rules, we need to find a different reason. Saying bad words to sound cooler is even worse because it doesn't work. Cussing up a storm will not guarantee you a higher rank on the popularity scale. It will only make you sound dumb.

Which is the biggest problem. Our vocabularies are diminishing, shrinking, dwindling, and depleting. They just “suck”. Our generation uses fewer words than ever before. When we want to describe something we either choose “it was fun” or “it was boring.” We can't go into any detail about anything because our brains are more full of obscenities than real, useful words.

So why do we want to use dirty words when there are so many other words to choose from? Because that's all we know. Few of us read books with a seventh grade or higher vocabulary level. We do most of our communication through text messages, which only requires us to know the quickest way to get a point across and what “lol” means. We don't know enough words like putrid, diligence or majestic to use them in everyday speech. And if you do use words like that, you're lucky if someone doesn't give you a confused look.

The only way to get past this dependency on using vulgar, non-descriptive words is to stop thinking they're cool and start reading. When everyone realizes that profanity is just pointless, filler words, we can start reading more and expanding our vocabularies. Then maybe we will be able to have more intelligent conversations with people that contain words with more than four letters.

the blazer staff

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Fairbury Jr/Sr High School
1501 9th Street
Fairbury, NE, 68352
(402)-729-6116

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