

Language for Listening

Sacred words for the journey

By **Melanie DewBerry-Jones**

I love words and language. I've heard it said that "the mouth is our mirror." I have loved studying languages over the years: Japanese, Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin), French (the teacher gave up on me, for good cause), Portuguese (I gave up on myself, too much like French), and American Sign Language (as an interpreter I accidentally signed flying vagina instead of spaceship).

While I have not always been adept at languages, I found that the language itself took residence inside me and informed my being. Japanese taught gentleness and patience, Spanish and Italian expressive beauty and connection, French brought a regal feel into my body, and Chinese taught me respect. In fumbling for the right word I always found the grace of a listener eager to connect. The right words open doors of the heart and mind. For me it was all about feeling into the words, allowing them to teach me what to say and when. This intuitive alliance has created rapport where there was none before.

I knew then what I continue to believe today: rapport is created by understanding and respecting the worlds of others. Language and words were my rapport-building mechanism. In coaching, I ask myself: "What are the words in this client's language that will allow them to experience their truest reality?"

Bringing Sacred Words to coaching

I look for ways to make the conversation between my client and me *sustainable*. I resist the urge to coach a crisis, an event or a situation. Coaching the human rather than the behavior provides a macro application for what is being coached and gives sustainability to the client.

You have heard the data: We have about 60,000 thoughts a day, most of which are negative, and we repeat the same thoughts over and over again. Because thought comes before behavior, it stands to reason that our thoughts have the power to shift our behavior. What fills your thoughts — and your client's? We can

Sacred Word	Definition	Example of Application
Communion Commune	Mutual participation; talking intimately.	When we as client and coach can be in communion, connection happens and we are forever changed. Who will you be in communion with? What difference it will make? How is it happening now?
Sacred	To make holy.	Time with you is sacred. What if client time were sacred, how would you approach it?
Holy Holiness	That which cannot be transgressed or violated. That which must be preserved whole or intact.	What would shift if you saw the client as holy rather than difficult?
Glorious Glory	Great praise or honor.	What words would come from your mouth? What action? How are glory and the bottom line in alignment?
Reverence	Respect greatly.	You can be angry at a client and continue to hold him in reverence. What is the gift in doing so?
Devotion	Faithful, dedicated, committed; a discipline.	How do devotion and passion coexist for you?
Generative	Producing new life or offspring.	Everything we do from here forward will be purposely generative; our life depends on it.

Generative

Holy

Sacred

Reverence

Glory

evolve how we think and behave — one word at a time.

One word, applied consistently, will shift how and what you think. To test this theory, I began an experiment. I went back in time to retrieve words that called forth my natural exuberance, the *Sacred Words*, and began integrating them into my everyday vocabulary. I was apprehensive that they sounded religious or overly dramatic. What would people think of me for using these terms? Yet there was a resonance I couldn't deny.

I then conducted an experiment with fifteen people from varying backgrounds: religious or not, spiritual, agnostic, doubtful, none of the above. The participants did not know what they were responding to until the experiment was over. Both my own experience and theirs held a high level of resonance for the *Sacred Words*.

You have already heard these *Sacred Words*. They are not a secret. I now invite you to know them intimately and to integrate them purposefully. Speak and feel the resonance of the *Sacred Words*.

Allow yourself to repurpose the words, shaking off any limiting dogma. Take a look at them again. Say the words one at a time. Slow yourself down and speak each word again. Do you find resonance? Take one word, perhaps one that feels easy to use, and integrate it into your coaching. Notice how the word re-contextualizes both you and the situation. Over time, note any impact on your client.

In my research, the *Sacred Words* had a 55% resonance factor, with the exception of the word *holy*, which had a dissonance of 65%. When the word was changed to *holiness* it had a 65% resonance factor. Why the wide

chasm between *holy* and *holiness*? *Holy* is the only sacred word with defamatory use.

The language of evolution

We are not just changing, we are evolving into the next stage of being. We are evolving not only into citizens of the earth but also into cosmological beings, aligned with and connected to our relationships with each other and this universe. Our survival depends on it. We are moving from using this planet and each other as resources to a generative, integrative way of living.

For a new way of being we require a new language that is equally as generative, a language that expresses and promotes our spiritual potential. Anyone who speaks another language knows how limited English can be in creating connection. For example, our definition of *professional* implies curtailing personal connection and emotional expression. We are so afraid of the word *love* that we often reduce its meaning to *sex*. Yet we are so hungry for love that when we find connection with another we often sexualize it rather than deepen the connection with love.

We need a new way of expressing the essence of a deeper truth and beauty. We need a language that teaches us the meaning of love as we speak. We can build a foundation of peace through *Sacred Words*. We are evolving into our resonance one word at a time!

Gloria in Excelsis Deo. •

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