

Word Play

The prevention of violence against women has many facets. One way to begin this process is to change, not only how we speak, but the words that we say. It is a known fact that we live in a society that condones violence against women. One factor that can contribute to society's demise is word play. Words are powerful. We need to evaluate our language and consider how "we" as a society or community can best communicate the truth about violence against women and children and place the blame where it belongs - on the ABUSER.

Look at the following phrases and see how a simple phrase, used in everyday speech, has direct connotations of violence.

I'll "shoot" you an e-mail.	"Killing" two birds with one stone
"Shoot" the breeze	More "bang" for your buck
"Push" over	"Kick" the bucket
"killing" time	"Hit" the road
Take your best "shot"	"Twist" my arm
To be "brutally" honest	"Blows" up in your face
Right on "target"	"Hit" me up
"Shooting" from the hip	"Armed" with the facts
Traffic was "murder"	Time to bring out the big "guns"
Drop "dead" gorgeous	When "push" comes to "shove"
To soften the "blow"	"Beats" me
Roll with the "punches"	Bite the "bullet" and do it
Get away with "murder"	Set the world on "fire"
You're "hitting" the nail right on the head	

Simple phrases such as these are used in everyday conversation. As a collective group, "we" should try using phrases that positively explain how we are feeling without the images of violence. For example, instead of saying, "She is a battered woman" we should say "He is an abuser". Instead of saying "He has an anger control problem" we should say "He uses abuse to have power and control over his partner".

Women and men alike must be willing to address the stereotypes and oppressions that are used to keep violence against women and children in place. Each person who understand the issues has the opportunity to help others understand as well, by choosing words that reflect the truth about domestic and sexual violence.