

## Spread the Word to End the Word

Written by Gayle Nobel

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Words DO Matter. This is a very powerful personal message from John C. McGinley.

Hi, I'm John C. McGinley. I'm an ambassador for the National Down Syndrome Society, and today I'm teaming up with Special Olympics to bring you a message that's important to me.

So many times in life you are asked to change...

Change your clothes. Change lanes. Change jobs. Change the sheets. Change flights. Change your tune. Change horses midstream. Change your latitudes and your attitudes!

Change, and the ability to adapt, is to the human condition as air is to the lungs. We change, and in the doing, we thrive!

What if, on March 31, you elected to change the way you use the words "retard" and "retarded"?

Hardly seems like the largest of sacrifices. Not when you consider the changes in language that you have, so willingly, already elected to integrate into your vernacular. You no longer use the words nigger, or kike, or faggot, or jap, or kraut, or mick, or wop.

Why would you? Why on earth would you? Those are all words that hurt. Those are all racial and ethnic slurs and epithets that perpetuate negative stigmas. They are painful! And that is not okay. It is wrong to pain people with your language. Especially, when you have already been made aware of your oral transgression's impact.

Make no mistake about it: WORDS DO HURT! And when you pepper your speak with "retard" and "retarded," you are spreading hurt. So stop it. Stop saying "retard" and "retarded." Those words suck! You are better than that and you definitely do not need to be "that guy."

There is no longer any acceptable occasion to lace your dialogue with the words "retard" and "retarded." Without fail, those words are the stuff of hurt. They, straight up, are. So, stop it! Stop using the "R-word."

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The 7 million people with intellectual disabilities (around the planet) who are on the receiving end of this hate speak are genetically designed to love unconditionally. These "retards" are NEVER going to return your vitriol. Ever! So what could possibly be the up-side of continuing to use the "R-word" in your daily discourse?

We love you. We do!

And, just in case you missed it and you need an extra hug? We love you!

You do not need to love us in any kind of reciprocal fashion. You don't. (It's not that kind of bargain.)

But, how about on March 31, you elect to change? A word? Two stinkin' syllables?

On March 31, join us and "Spread the Word to End the Word." And the word is "retard"! It HURTS! So help us to cut it out.

Thank you! We do love you!

John C. McGinley

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