

Thank you.

You are reading this for one of two reasons, you've received a 'words hit' card from someone who heard you use 'the R word' or someone showed you the card thinking you'd find it 'cool'. Either way, thanks. The cards were created as part of a world wide movement to eliminate 'words that hurt' from language. Our particular focus is on the word 'retard' because of the powerful damage it does to the self esteem of people with intellectual disabilities. We share with you three facts and five things you can do to help.

The Facts.

Fact One: The BBC did a world wide survey of people with disabilities asking which word, in reference to disability, was the most personally offensive. The number one word was the word, 'Retard'. People with disabilities find this word horribly hurtful.

Fact Two: Many argue that the word 'retard' has many usages in language and therefore should not be eliminated. This is disingenuous. We have no trouble with using the word with its alternate meanings. We are referring to the use of the word in 'name calling'. This should be obvious but to some it's not. Part of the 'words hurt' message is very simple, little children understand calling another a hurtful name is wrong.

Fact Three: We are doing this because the people with intellectual disabilities in our organization told us that they did not feel safe in the community. They asked to join with us to combat the use of words that pierce their self esteem. This is not something we are doing 'for' people with disabilities, it is something we do 'with' them. Together.

5 Things You Can Do:

- 1) First congratulate yourself. Really. You've got the card, for whatever reason, and you went to the bother to find out more. This shows that you care enough to challenge or inform yourself. You probably aren't afraid of personal growth, for that, congratulations!
- 2) Watch your words. Words really hurt. We've all heard that 'sticks and stones will break your bones but names will never hurt you'. How's that for a big social lie?? Words really hurt. Just being aware of this will automatically make you kinder. That's the change we want in the world. Be it.
- 3) Carefully confront others. We made the card so that confrontation can be done by simply passing it to someone. It's not easy but it's easier. However nothing works as well as, 'Please don't use words that hurt around me.' It lets people know that they've been heard and they've been called to change. This is how many racial epithets have come to an end.

- 4) Write a letter. If you hear someone in power use 'words that hurt' write them a letter. It's important that your voice be heard. One voice is simply one voice but added to many it's a chorus. Trust us, you won't be alone.
- 5) Notice the inclusion or exclusion of people with disabilities from your life. Ask at your work about adaptations for employees with physical or intellectual disabilities. Work to make your world accessible, hire people with disabilities, make places of worship accessible, ensure that your community welcomes all.