

MR EDWARDS' MOTTO

17 Words Can
Change Your Life!



BY JIM EDWARDS

Foreword

Most young people have been victims of horrible, cynical, cutting, and demeaning comments. Since I've been a teacher for a good part of my life, I've witnessed the damage these insensitive comments inflict. As a teacher, I've looked for ways to counter the negative with a positive attitude and encouraging word.

Listening to college professor and speaker Keith Moore, I heard a remarkably encouraging phrase, ideal for young people. He asked his students (young and old) to repeat it at the beginning of class. My wife, Diane, and I augmented this phrase.

I began writing it on classroom chalk and dry-erase boards for students to repeat. To avoid stealing instruction time, I stood outside classrooms shaking hands and taking attendance. Then after the students said the phrase together, I explained it, then had them say to their neighbor - "That's also about you!"

Over the years in my attempt to brighten the lives of students, I've refined my approach to explain its meaning more fully. Often former students stop me to repeat this very encouraging, 17-word phrase.

In 2018 a Senior Class made it their class Motto, emblazoned on a banner to permanently hang in a hallway. Another school's Senior Class produced a permanent YouTube testimonial video, "Who is Mr. Edwards?" Unexpectedly for a substitute, a 2-page spread was featured in the school's newspaper.

Over my 25-year career teaching, my goal has been to help motivate students to a better, happier life, no matter their background, I.Q., or physical condition. It is my hope this phrase will bless, encourage, and inspire you!

Say this out loud !

I'm Quick!

I'm Sharp!

I'm Bright!

I'm Smart!

**I'm Rich and
Good Lookin'**

**And A Major
Blessing!**

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I'm Quick! I'm Sharp! I'm Bright! I'm Smart!

You probably have heard hurtful, negative comments others have said about you. These comments can happen at any age, these lies, seem worst in Middle/Junior High School. By the time you get to Senior High School, many of us have been branded as unfit to be in the “cool” group.

Stop believing that junk! It is a lie! It's from insecure little minds who don't know the *real* you! In fact . . .

You are Awesome!

Yes, I'm talking to you! Believe it! Don't let what others say affect you! Most of the time they care only about themselves and are looking for a way to prop up their poor self-image.

Kids find any little thing about others they can use to make themselves feel superior, and then *pick, pick, pick* at it with their little group. They might focus on these:

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| - your clothes | - your hair |
| - your shoes | - your glasses |
| - your skin | - your weight |
| - your height | - your grades |

If you start believing the lies, they will stick with you. They become a part of you. Once you believe what they say, you begin to act like it is true! Stop! Don't believe the lies!

When I was young, someone called me stupid. It might have been a classmate, a teacher or even my Dad after a particularly rough day at work (your parents can have tough days)! It doesn't matter now! What matters is – I believed it - so it stuck with me! I acted like and became a terrible student!

In 6th grade my teachers wanted to flunk me, but because my Dad was on the school board, they couldn't without risking their jobs. So instead, after school was out that year, they made me return to redo homework, tests, and quizzes, as well as making me scrape gum off desks!

What were my friends and classmates doing? They were at the pool, the beach, on vacation, or playing baseball. (You get the idea.) Our school had no air conditioning. It was just hot!

In high school I continued getting what I believed and what I said – horrible grades! Almost straight “Ds” in Algebra, Geometry, Biology, Speech, Spanish, English, and History. I finished in the lower quarter of my graduating class. I was never expected to go to college.

However, in the last semester of my senior year, my Algebra II teacher, Peg Bergman, helped me get a “B!” I learned I wasn't stupid, but a “bucket head” (one who can't get enough good information). I am continually reading and learning). I ended up with a Master's degree and kept going to school to learn more.

Stop listening to the lies! You are an amazing person!

I know of a 7th-grade kid who was sick half the school year, so got behind in Algebra, and never caught up. His high school math teacher asked, “Are you “Renner's kid?” He replied, “Yes.” The teacher replied, “Well, I didn't like your Dad and I don't like you, so we'll just call you ‘Stupid Renner!’”

That name stuck. He became “Stupid Renner!” Today, Rick Renner is one of the world's-foremost Greek scholars and has written several huge volumes on the subject! He's anything but stupid.

Stop listening to the lies! You are an amazing person!

I'm Rich!

Oh, I know what you're thinking! Oh No! That's not me!
No! No! No! I'm poor! I can't say "I'm Rich," because it's not true!

Hey! It's not about you right now! You are saying this about your future! It is also about many more things in life including love, wisdom and friendship.

Your confession has everything to do with your life! Your parents may or may not have money. That has nothing to do with you! You are speaking about your future: 15, 20, or 30-years from now!

A gang member in Detroit changed his attitude and the way he spoke. His life turned completely around. After 29 years as Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital, Dr. Ben Carson became United States Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and worth a reported \$29 million.

Your Words are Powerful!

In school you are taught about the "law of Gravity" as well as its effect on everything and how it works – every time. There are many other natural laws we constantly use like Force, Lift, Motion, as well as Supply and Demand.

Today, few kids are raised on a farm, so they never learn about another critical unchangeable law. It's almost never taught in any school. What is it? It's the "**law of Planting and Harvesting!**"

This law includes everything in life. Here's a shocking reality - **What comes out of your mouth, is exactly what you are going to get in life!** It pertains to everything. It is a universal law! So, you must be very careful about what you say!

Imagine, you plant a kernel of corn in wonderfully rich soil; make certain it gets plenty of sunlight at the right temperature; water it; and protect it from bugs and animals. Finally, after months of waiting, you'll get a beautiful apple tree. Isn't that right?

Right? Plant a kernel of corn and get an apple tree?

No! You'd get a corn stalk. *I guess that means whatever you plant, you're going to get more of the same back.*

If I said to a classroom full of kids, "I hate you stupid, horrible little jerks!" They would hate me and so would all their friends. There would be even more hate after they told their parents, who'd mention it to their friends, so by the end of the day, hundreds of people would hate me! **It's the "law of Planting and Harvesting!"** I planted hate - so would receive - hate!

Back to corn. After 3-4 months that kernel would grow into a single stalk of corn yielding at least one ear with a bare minimum of eight hundred kernels capable of being replanted.

Imagine if I told you to give me \$1 and I'd return 800 times as much to you? You might decide to "scrounge around" and find more to invest. Planting and harvesting is how farmers with large farms get rich! They plant a little, diligently guard and protect it, and eventually harvest a huge crop!

This applies to all of us as well. You need to carefully watch what you plant in your mind along with guarding what comes out of your mouth. Make no mistake: You WILL get what comes out of your mouth - in abundance!

WARNING: Don't get a big head, publicly stating, "I'm Rich! I'm Rich!" Your friends will hate you! Instead, in private when you're in your home, speak to yourself, saying things like, "Every step I take, I'm getting closer to my goals. Money IS coming in. Everything I'm doing IS prospering my life!"

Almost everyone thinks being rich is about cash. However, **being rich includes much more than what's in your wallet.** Don't make money the most important thing in your life. (People can have millions but still feel miserable and inadequate IF they have no joy in their lives.)

Planning

All farmers understand not to plant seeds without serious planning. They look for the best soil to make certain what they plant will provide a significant return on their investment.

There are some seeds you can spread like kindness, love, respect, a smile, assistance or even money that provide unexpected long-term results from unexpected sources.

It is vital to “plant” only where you are certain to get a great return. [Some have seen beggars on the street who eventually drive away in fancy cars. Your money and good deeds are wasted (YouTube: ABC10 News Nov 12, 2014)].

Caution: Once I was part of a group aiding a grandmother pleading for help after her mobile home had been flooded. On a sweltering/humid summer day, we drove nearly an hour to assist her. Sweating profusely we tore out heavy, soggy, stinky carpeting, fixed holes in her flooring and even made repairs. Meanwhile, her husband, grandson, and girlfriend washed and waxed his new, shiny red truck in the shade never offering to help. When we finished she wasn't satisfied with all the free labor and materials. She threatened to sue us! Lesson: Be vigilant and wary before committing to making a significant investment!

What is the proper way to “plant” money?

One time in the 1970s I took my family to Canada on a working vacation. (They vacationed, I worked.) We went to a Burger King for dinner. Just inside the door was an older woman washing tables. The fury of her work, being bent over plus the scowl on her face (sad to admit) made me want to turn away.

But after we found our seats and picked up our food, I said to my wife, “I think we're supposed to give that lady...” My wife finished the sentence with “\$20!”

So, I walked up to her and slipped her a \$20 bill, then returned to eat dinner. Just a few minutes later a beautiful, smiling lady approached our table. Who was she?

Suddenly, I recognized her. It was the same lady I avoided. She said, "I knew I shouldn't do it, but last night I went gambling and lost almost all my money. I had enough money to get to work, but the last bus leaves at nine tonight and I'm scheduled to work until ten. If I leave early, I'll lose my job. So I prayed, "God please send me some money and help me get home tonight. Then you gave me the money - as an answer to my prayer."

This was planting, even though I didn't understand, or expect a harvest. (The longer the wait, the greater the harvest!)

Years later, my back went out, making it impossible to work and forcing me into humiliating rides in the motorized shopping carts at Walmart. We had no money coming in. We were nearly broke, with bills piling up. I was approaching hopelessness.

After several months my back was miraculously healed. Just a couple of days later, a man approached me saying "this is for you." Thanking him, I quickly pocketed the envelope and proceeded to my auto, heading to Walmart. I thought it was \$20 or maybe \$50! We could buy some groceries or gasoline.

My wife said, "Didn't someone give you an envelope? Let me see it." I gave it to her. She opened it and nearly fainted. It was a check for \$10,000! Five days later a high school student approached me saying, "Someone said to give this to you." I opened the envelope and found fifteen \$100 bills - \$1,500.

These were blessings I didn't ask for, or expect, but came just in the nick of time. I planted years earlier and now **harvested!**

I'm Good Lookin'!

You all are better looking than me. I tell kids, you all have - hair! Must be nice! Have you considered donating your extra hair to guys like me who are hair-follicle challenged – you know, bald?

Seriously though, none of you have *permanent* wrinkles on your face! I do! Everyone of you is better looking right this minute than I will ever be the rest of my life! It's really true!

Fact: in the history of the world there has never been - or ever will be - anyone *exactly* like you! (Yes, twins look very much alike, but it is always possible to tell them apart.) Every person is unique - distinct! **You are singular and marvelous!**

When I was in grade school, I got beat up regularly. Later, I would often be chided with "Do you want a metal or a chest to pin it on." I was mocked since I didn't have hair on my chest.

I've found "bullies" do far more damage with the tongue. My daughters would come home from school and other activities crying due to the hurtful things girls said. But they are beautiful, all grown up, with great husbands, families, and friends.

Search the internet and you'll find many "A-listers" who were very unpopular in school, had terrible home lives, but now are envied and worshipped by millions. So, stop listening to all the negative! Just be your awesome self!

Real attractiveness comes from deep inside. It's your smile, your countenance, your personality, and your confidence!

I'm A Major Blessing!

You have no idea how important you are! You have no idea how many people you will affect in your lifetime, OR the impact you're making in other people's lives right now. I'm serious as a heart attack! **You are that significant!**

Don't ever think you are not important, because some small-minded person or clique doesn't value you! What makes them so important anyway? Keep this deep in your heart. You are incredible! There's an excellent plan for your life! No, I don't have any idea what it is – but it is terrific! You should be excited!

The Unimportant Nanny

A lady, Elizabeth Everest, never dated, got married or had children. She never invented or wrote anything of any importance. She was a nanny for a child whose parents were never around. After seventeen years of service, the boy's parents called her in, thanked her, and said, "You're fired!" Four years later, she died, never knowing her value.

She never knew the little boy whose life she molded would grow up to be Winston Churchill, the man who is said to have saved Great Britain, Western Civilization, and millions from the Nazis in World War II. He encouraged his people with the phrase, "Never, Never, Never Give Up!"

Greatness comes suddenly without warning.

You never may be warned when your call to greatness comes. You could be driving, listening to some great tunes when you come upon an accident and are able to save several people's lives. No one else could do what you did!

It happened to my Dad. He was helping me one Sunday at 6:00 a.m. on my paper route, when he saw a car trying to "cut through" a street closed for construction. The car's frame struck a utility (man) hole throwing three occupants through the windshield. Dad was the only person awake and around at that time and was able to save all their lives!

You may see a weird guy walking down the street. As you pass you can't stop yourself from saying, "Hi handsome!" You are shocked by what you said. You think, "What was I thinking? I can't believe I said that!" But what you didn't realize is that no one had said anything nice to him for the last six months. He was on his way home to commit suicide. You just saved his life. You may never know it!

A friend of mine was teaching a class on a very complicated subject. He encouraged one particular young man and thought little about it afterward.

After the class, my friend continued with his businesses and family life. After six months he received an unexpected phone call. That same man wanted to write an article for an important publication about him! Surprised, he said, "Why me?" The man said, "You remember the day you had me in class? That morning I had planned to commit suicide later that evening. You saved my life."

In the 1700s, a man named Stradivarius made the world's finest violins. Each instrument is valued for as much as \$16,000,000 with only six hundred fifty surviving. **But, there is only 1 of you! You are much more unique and priceless!**

The next time someone says something negative about you, remember how amazing and valuable you are. There is only 1 of you and *never* before, or after, in history will there be another!

I'm a Failure

I'd like you to know, I'm a failure - - - as a Mother and a Pro Football Player. However, I've played nearly 2 dozen instruments professionally or in school. Very few football players can claim the same.

The point is - not all of you will become cheerleaders, athletes, Student Council members, or straight "A" students. But you have talents and abilities no one else has – a skill those other students don't have.

- You may become an auto mechanic with great insight, able to solve problems allowing a doctor to get to the hospital to save another person's life.
- You might become a terrific father or mother raising amazing children who will save many lives.
- You might become a company's executive finding ways to help employees make good money and get affordable health insurance.
- As an IT specialist, you might save your company hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Did you know Wrigley Gum, Quaker Oats, Pepsi Cola, Borden's, and the Aunt Jemima companies went bankrupt three times? Henry Ford went bankrupt five times. Elvis Presley's music teacher said he couldn't sing. Walt Disney's cartoons were turned down by the Chicago Tribune. Decca Records turned down the Beatles. Here's a reminder: Winston Churchill's advice: "Never, Never, Never give up!"

Stop listening to and believing those who say negative things about you! Don't ever feel you are not important! There's a great plan for your life! Whatever you do, do it with all your might! You are vital! People are counting on you!

Hopefully, you now understand:

**You're Quick!
You're Sharp!
You're Bright!
You're Smart!**

**You're Rich and
Good Lookin'**

**And A Major
Blessing!**



James S. Edwards

Mr. Edwards presents encouraging, uplifting and fun messages focused on audiences twelve and up. Former students still repeat his 17-word motto reversing the effects of cutting, derisive, belittling and other bullying comments.

For 20+ years in sales/marketing he traveled extensively through the U.S. and Canada including presentations at national educator conferences, as well as writing educational journal articles and pamphlets. From 2004-2021 he was a substitute teacher in Missouri, entertainer, disaster relief volunteer, private teacher and magician.

Jim received a Bachelor of Music Education from Illinois Wesleyan University and earned a Master of Music from Northern Illinois University. As an innovative educator for 13 years, Jim started the first swing and jazz choirs in Illinois plus an early show choir.

For Questions – Inquiries – Presentations
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