

A Single Word

Oyasama says:

"A single word is important."

Anecdotes of Oyasama, no. 137, "A Single Word"

The following quotes are from a collection of sayings compiled by the great writer Leo Tolstoy:



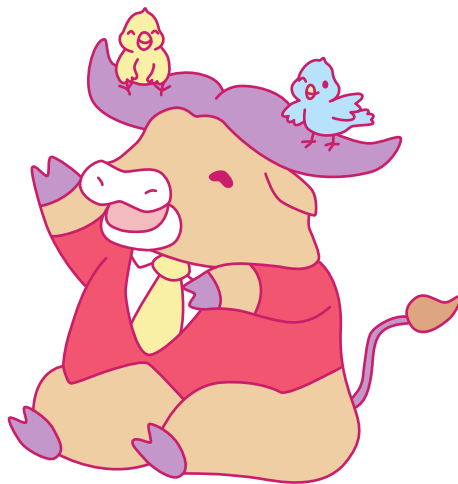
"If you cannot calm your anger now, you had better hold your tongue."

"The more you want to say something, the greater the danger that you will say things that are wrong."

"Having an argument does not so much clarify the truth as obscure it."

Discussion is useful for looking at an issue from various points of view. However, if it escalates, it could trigger negative emotions, which can often lead to a game of one-upmanship, where the key question will be who manages to force his or her opinion on others, rather than what is right or correct. In extreme cases, people might trade harsh words just to insult others.

When we have a strong negative emotion, expressing every thought that comes into our mind can be dangerous. This is because we are likely to lack self-control and consideration for others. Also, we would do well to remember that directly pointing out a fault in someone could spark anger, particularly if the criticism is felt to be correct. Although the sound of our words itself disappears instantly, the person's memory of receiving blunt and harsh criticism, which he or she might regard as reflecting contempt, could be deeply embedded and remain for a long time. Just one word said in the heat of anger could damage a relationship irreparably. Being wrapped up in trying to make our own opinions heard could affect our ability to pay close attention to how a remark we are about to make might sound to its recipient.



Consideration for others is a vital key to making effective use of language, which is essentially an instrument for connecting people. If we use loving and caring language, we will begin to see more and more people gather around us.

A person who is a master of language is a master artist of life.