


It's Only Words...

By Cathie M. Clark

The BeeGees song says: "It's only words...but words are all I have..." 

My business is words. Other people's words. On their websites that I rescue from neglect and the ravages of time. Sometimes my clients accept MY words, to help them convey their message. When they do, I make sure the words I give them TELL THE TRUTH — about them, their businesses, what they can do to help others.

I have written before about LYING, and I'm not going to write further about that. Why we believe people who use words to deceive is what I want to talk about now.

And I won't use the "T" word, even though that is what is motivating me to write this now. Many words have been written about Income Tax Returns. We all have filed our returns over the years and should know the difference between "paying no taxes" and "owing no taxes" at the time we file for the year. But what do we believe? That a multi-millionaire can make multi-millions and pay no taxes on it? Really? Who would be to blame for that if it was true? IRS? The most ravenous government entity in the world? Gun-toting, asset-confiscating IRS? Why would we *believe* that?

I am no CPA, but I am familiar with the tax law that requires advance payments of taxes. If you file your return and owe more than a certain amount — over \$3,000 let's say — IRS gleefully mails you a bunch of coupons with which you are required by law to pay taxes each quarter in advance for the next year. It happened to me

when I was introduced to the so-called "self-employment tax", which is basically the other half of the FICA taxes employees have withheld from their checks. Their employer normally pays the other half, but when you are freelancing (basically employing yourself) you end up owing the whole thing. And IRS wants it ahead of time. And they pay no interest to you on that money.

Nobody escapes IRS. That's the truth.

So why do we believe — even a *little* — that somebody pays no taxes? Because we don't LIKE him? Because we need to think we are being picked on while others are getting away with things? Because *we want to*? Do we really? If so, that is a topic for a good shrink to sort out. It does take courage and conviction to question the unbelievable, but the reward is it keeps us from blindly believing anything we are told. Beware of the slippery slope.

The old saying "sticks and stones may break my bones but words can never hurt me" no longer applies. Words CAN hurt us all. At the least, words can get you restricted on Facebook, banned from Twitter, shunned by your friends and family. Worst case, words can send you to jail. Especially lying words, if there are no words of truth to counter them.

A certain politician from California who has been spouting deceitful words for years — and seemingly getting away with it — has justifiably been bounced off the U.S. House Intelligence Committee. Maybe things are turning around? I certainly hope so. (Note: If you don't know

about this, your news source is depriving you of words you need to know!)


Words can be kind. Words can be comforting. Words can be enlightening. When we speak them, we hope we are understood – correctly. Interpreted accurately. But some people are better at using words than other people. Those people can be dangerous. God’s Commandment #9 says “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.” I like to think it is God who will sort it out with those people at the Pearly Gates. But maybe we should not wait for that.

When we recognize falsehoods, maybe we should not waste our time listening to their source ever again. Use Judge Judy’s standard: “When I catch you in a lie, *I don’t believe anything else you say.*” When a politician is revealed to have lied to us, maybe we should not vote for him/her again. There are many Walter

Cronkite-type news reporters out there. Perhaps you can find one you like who doesn’t embellish, exaggerate, or withhold relevant details.

We should not be too busy to be our own personal fact-checkers and deceit should carry a price. You decide for yourself what that would be. But make sure it *has* a price.

And if you have adopted AI-generated words to describe your business on your website or in print, make sure it does not contain exaggerations, embellishments (this includes stock photography instead of images of your own work), minimalizations, or omissions of important details that in practice could damage your reputation.

 “...Words are all I have...” Yes, they are.

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