

Use the Filter

By Lesley Leslie



Have there been times where someone called you “rude” during a discussion, when you thought you were just being honest with them? Do your conversations occasionally end with someone accusing you of not having a filter? What do you think they mean by that?

When a person is described as having “no filter,” he or she typically says exactly what is on their mind. They don’t really consider their language or comments, although it may be offensive, insensitive or politically incorrect. That person doesn’t care about the other person’s feelings when they “speak their mind” or “tell it like it is!”

Consider the literal, primary definition of a filter — a device containing such a material, especially one used to extract impurities from air or water. Now imagine if you will, how you might have used a filter in the past? Certainly images of a brewing pot of coffee initially come to mind. However, you might also visualize a water filter, an HVAC filter for your air conditioner, a vacuum cleaner filter, a photograph filter, an air filter or an engine oil filter for your car, just to name a few. How would those items work without the benefit of their filters? You probably would never be able to drink that favorite cup of coffee again, huh?

If you can imagine how important it is to use a filter in each of the aforementioned examples, then contemplate how necessary it is to apply a filter to the thoughts that come into your mind on a daily basis. That mind filter extracts or holds back the impurities that could be spoken via your vocal vessel (your mouth). The filter is the difference between you telling someone that they “look like a hot mess” or that you “don’t think their outfit really suits their body type.” You can utilize your filter by asking yourself if the first thought that comes to mind and subsequent comment will unnecessarily upset or hurt the person that you are speaking to. If the answer is yes, then apply the filter. Choose your words carefully. Words are very powerful. They have the ability to build up and they can also tear down.