

Right Speech

We do not begin this step by resolving to speak nothing but the truth. Although that is an admirable goal, it is not one that can be achieved immediately.

Part 1

First, we must begin to notice our own speech. Take a moment to think about the following questions, and then write out your answers:

1. How often do I deviate from the truth in large or small ways? Why do I do this?
2. How often do I speak words that are unkind? What are my motives for doing this?

Part 2

Once we have observed ourselves, we can begin to make changes. Take a moment to think of concrete ways to improve your moral use of speech, and then write your responses to the following questions:

1. We should seek to speak the truth. Why am I afraid of the truth? What does lying say about who I am?
2. We should seek to speak with kindness. Why am I interested in idle chatter, gossip, slander, or abusive words? What do my attempts to put down others say about how I regard myself?

(This material is based on *The World's Religions*, revised and updated edition of *The Religions of Man*, by Huston Smith [San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991], pages 106–107. Copyright © 1991 by Huston Smith. Original copyright © 1958 by Huston Smith; copyright © renewed 1986 by Huston Smith.)

