

# What Is The Symbolic Power Of Words Or Powerful?

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It's one of the oldest idioms that inevitably the majority of us have heard as a youth on a playground: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me." Unfortunately, this old phrase isn't entirely true—it doesn't define which words are hurtful, the context they are used in, or its historical context. In fact, words can be powerful. There are a number of words in language, that are both negative and offensive, that have been used to oppress a specific group. Their history has produced such a negative symbolic power and creates such a stigma, that they possess the ability to harm or injure. "[Cunt](#)" is such a word. The word "cunt" used in modern language carries a heavy offensive potency in just one syllable. Saying phrases such as "You're a cunt!" "Stop being such a cunt" or "You fucking cunt" for those with more gusto for its use, reveals the misogyny that the word possesses. After all, "cunt" is another, albeit derogatory, word for vagina and (most) females have a vagina; and the vagina is the central powerful symbol for femininity. What does it mean then to essentially be a "vagina" (read cunt)? Furthermore, as a woman, what does it mean to have such a [pejorative](#) word aimed towards you with the intent to offend, harm, and essentially oppress one's...[show more content...](#)

Over time, the word has gained a tremendous amount of negative connotation, thus creating a powerfully insulting weapon. Men use the word to undermine femininity, and verbally assaulting a woman with the word suggests disgust and hatred. Said woman

hears the word, and as Bill Casselman argues, she interprets it as hate and dismissal of Goethe's "Eternal Feminine," which refers to the basic essence of femininity. Thus, the power of the word is used to damage the foundation of all qualities associated specifically with females and establish subordination to its counterpart,

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