

The power of heart-felt words !

~ Saheli Sheth (Peoria, USA)

“If we see a flaw in a painting, Then we say it's the fault of the painter. So if we see a flaw in God's creation, Then, knowingly or unknowingly, we are seeing fault in the Creator.” Sant Bhagwant Sahebji is one to see the beauty in every painting, in every one of God's creations. I have experienced this firsthand.

“See her eyes?” Sahebada remarked, pointing at me while speaking to a family member beside me. “They are so loving. She just has so much love within her.”

“Loving? Me?” I thought, puzzled. That was never a word I would have used to describe my reserved nature.

Yet He saw it within me, and so I became it.

A year later, on my birthday, I was surprised when multiple friends wished me well and described my greatest attribute as my unconditional love.

This is the power of seeing the strengths in others. Had Sahebada not told me that He saw me as 'loving,' I might never have felt the drive to acknowledge that God-given strength and let it overflow to those around me.

Sadguru Sant P.P. Shantidada also highlighted the strengths of his devotees. One day, my sister and I stood outside Shantidada's office in India when he gracefully emerged and began introducing us to other devotees waiting outside. Shantidada introduced me by saying, “This is Saheli. She is doing very elevated work with kids.” I looked at him in confusion. *With kids?* I had just graduated and didn't have a job at the time. And I didn't even consider myself as someone good with kids.

But He saw it in me, and so I became it.

Now, I work with kids and can't imagine it any other way. No matter where life takes me, my goal will always be to uplift the next generation, because this is what Shantidada has called me to do.

Others in satsang have recognized this same power of seeing the good in others. Sadhu Pujya Dilipdasji (UK) would always greet me with, “Hello, my beautiful angel!!!” Even years after his passing, what do I do when I need to hear a voice of

strength? I talk to myself the same way he would talk to me, and it always starts with, “Hello, my beautiful angel!”

Dilipdasji's kindness toward me literally rewired my kindness toward myself.

The impact these saints have had on my life mirrors the influence that guardians have on their children. See the strengths in them, and they will live up to them.

Of course, there are nuances to this approach. It doesn't mean overlooking negative behavior, such as rudeness; in those cases, it's more appropriate to teach our kids the skills to act differently.

I know my strong self-esteem comes from saints who speak of my strengths and from parents who are intentional with their words. Many loving parents have, at times, labeled their kids with words like “lazy” or “disobedient.” In the same way, many loving kids may call their guardians “strict” or “old-fashioned.” We all say things in moments of frustration that we might later wish to take back.

But I've found this reminder to be my guiding compass: **“Be careful with your words. You never know how many times they're repeating in someone's mind.”**

It's true—when we make a statement about someone, we never know how often they replay that tape in their mind. And as guardians, one of the *most* influential roles in a child's life, we never know when our words become the internal voice they hear.

So, we have a choice to make. Sahebada's words, “*She is loving,*” play in my mind daily, inspiring me to choose love, even when it's hard. Shantidada's affirmation, “*She does elevated work with kids,*” reminds me of my purpose each day. Dilipdasji's greeting, “*My beautiful angel,*” plays when I need to be kinder to myself. These saints were so loving with their words, and thank goodness they were, because these words are the tape playing on repeat in my mind.

May we choose kind words that uplift our kids. May we see the strengths within them. If your words were the soundtrack your children played in their minds daily, what would you want them to hear? ◆