

# LISTEN !

(Trần Nghi Âu Cơ)

The words love and beautiful get thrown around so much these days that when someone tells us they love us or that we're beautiful, we have trouble believing it. And when we shake our heads and smile skeptically, it's not because we're fishing for compliments; it's not because we want people to lather on the compliments. It's because we genuinely don't think it's true.

This isn't a post about body image and society's hand in that. This is a post about words. If you want your words to matter, choose them carefully. Because words are powerful. They're not huffs of air that dissolve into nothing. The things you say may fade from your mind, but they cling onto someone, somewhere.

It's not a big deal, except it is a big deal. As long as you have cognitive thought, and breath in your lungs, your words will never run out. As much as people say they're "at a loss for words," they can never truly be at a loss for words. blahbloobleplah is a word. But it is the worth of words that can dwindle with use.

It's hard, though, isn't it? It's hard to maintain the worth of words we hear and say as we grow older because we all wear masks and words are the embellishers of our masks. When we were kids, we were told to never lie and always tell the truth. It was simple. If a kid didn't like you, he told you so. Then we grow older and we learn about the gray areas and white lies and hurt feelings, which is all fine and dandy. But it often gets out of hand. We say things now simply to fill in the silence, like parrots squawking out phrases they really don't understand.

Childhood is measured out by sounds and smells and sights, before the dark hour of reason grows. —John Betjeman.

With their honesty and lack of filters, kids have much more interesting conversations. They can talk about nothing and everything at the same time with extreme simplistic poignancy.

So when a kid tells you you're beautiful, you can bet it's true.

Anyway, frankly, I'd much rather have a heated discussion with a five-year-old about the merits of each Skittle flavor than with an adult about anything. And I have. I got so into it, my friend had to remind me that I was dealing with a five-year-old. Which, I don't see why that matters. Because the yellow Skittles are NOT better than red ones, okay? What's the matter with you, kid? Regardless of age, you're wrong. So wrong.

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