

**Try NOT to use these words
they are unhelpful to all
yet we often use them**



Listening to conversations is a fascinating experience!

Some people pepper their sentences with words like ‘should’, ‘must’, ‘ought’ and ‘have to’.

For example:

“I really feel I have to attend this meeting”you can hear the reluctance in this sentence and probably also see it in the person’s face as the words are uttered.

“I should go to the gym more often but I just never seem to have the time” how often do we know what is good for us but always find an excuse?



The words –**should, must, have to and ought** - are very demanding, creating guilt, anxiety, personal pressure and even mild depression.

They suggest that the individual has no choice or control over the situation.

They indicate that the person is limited to options from outside influences. While this may be partly true – we always have a choice.

The choice may seem unrealistic but when you realise that you do have a choice, it is surprising how it seems to move the goalposts.

The choice can be recognised by changing the coercive words:

Try changing

‘should’

‘must’ to ‘could’

‘ought’

‘have to’

‘Could’ means you have a choice – it may not be a big choice but you do have one and this enables you to search for other alternatives.

Sometimes, social and work pressures mean that doing what **we** want would damage an important relationship or would not be appropriate



but at least when you realise you are choosing to keep the status quo, you are making a choice and are therefore more in control.

Try this exercise:
Write down some 'shoulds', 'musts', 'need to' 'ought to' or 'have to'....
I should
I must
I have to
I ought to
I should
I must
I have to
I ought to
I need to



Once you have completed as many as you can, ask your self – whose ‘should’ etc are they?

Who says you should do these things?

If the answer is ‘me’ you seem to be coercing yourself to do a lot of things.

If the answer is other people, it is good to be aware of the demands that other people are putting on you.

It doesn’t mean you have to change but it is good to be aware of who is pulling your strings.

Now change all the coercive words to ‘could’. Actively score out ‘should’, ‘have to’, ‘ought’ and ‘must’ and replace it with ‘could’. Now you have a choice!

You could do these things that are pressures in your life, but what would happen if you didn’t?

If you decide you still want to do them, do them with conviction and joy in your heart. This will create a positive state instead of the negative state, which would have resulted from coercion.



It is always good to induce the 'feel good' factor and you will notice a change in reaction from the receiver of your action. It is a win/win occasion!

When you have chosen to do something with positive intent, this is recognised at an emotional and cellular level in our body and results in a very successful outcome and good mental health.

Summary

Try changing

'should'

'must'

'ought'

'have to'

to 'could'

