Words are the most powerful tool that can be employed. They have the power to create, destroy, bend, twist, shape, sharpen, dull, and catalyze thoughts, feelings, emotions, and actions. Words can create problems and solve them. They are, in short, a double-edged sword that must be honed to uncanny precision. Even one misplaced word can rend a friendship forever or set nations at each other’s throats. Perhaps the most powerful task a word can perform is to link us to something by stating our relation to, or ownership of, it. Think about this: so often we are forced to use academic writing, no personal connections whatsoever. However, whenever we say something as simple as “I believe” we are irreparably linking ourselves to an idea, claiming it as our own.

In this capacity, words show their true power. They allow us to bond not only with ideas, but people of differing cultures, backgrounds, languages, and beliefs. You can duel with words and debate the merits of one idea or belief over another, but this interaction can serve to ultimately bring people closer. Words have the power to unite cultures and nations into cohesive, if not totally agreeable, units. They also have the power to send cultures and nations into a frenzy of war and bloodshed.

In this light, shaping one’s ability with words, no matter what language you speak, is one of the most important tasks to be taken on. We live in a world where social interaction is increasingly dependent on technology over real personal contact, but the power of the written word is no less significant than that of the spoken word. We have to distance ourselves from the idea that shortening words and phrases makes them more efficient and learn instead to shape our sentences and tones to convey ideas better. Efficiency is too often cold; it needs warmed with emotion of some kind. Emotion fuels and drives words and those that use them, and it is therefore our task to cultivate words with our emotions as two parts of the same being.

This is what I believe: words are a human’s most powerful tool, with powers for good and ill that require us to cultivate and craft our ability with words to use them to further a more just and equitable global society.